Wii+DS The Best Games of E3

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[redacted]

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003
TIME 1'05"64
02 BOSS
0'36"78
BOOST
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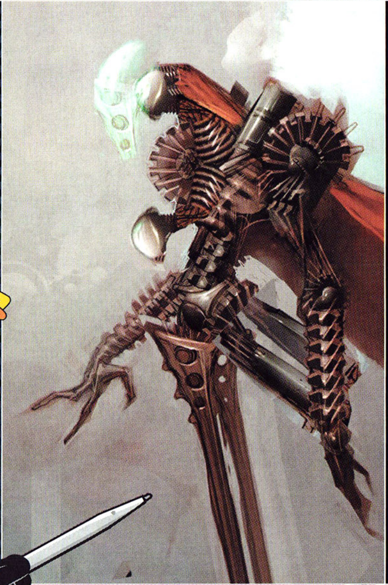
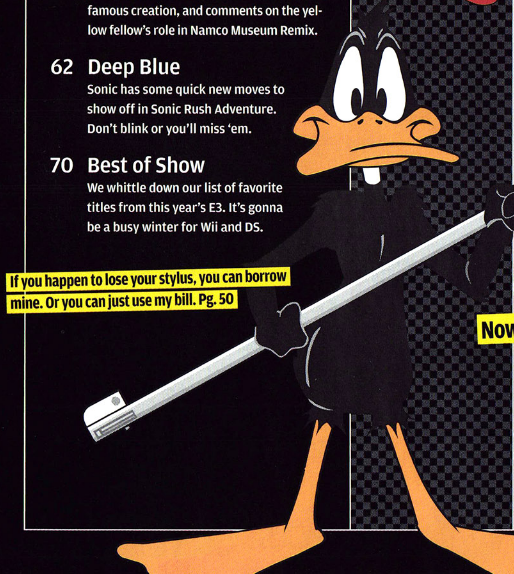


The Pac is back, baby!

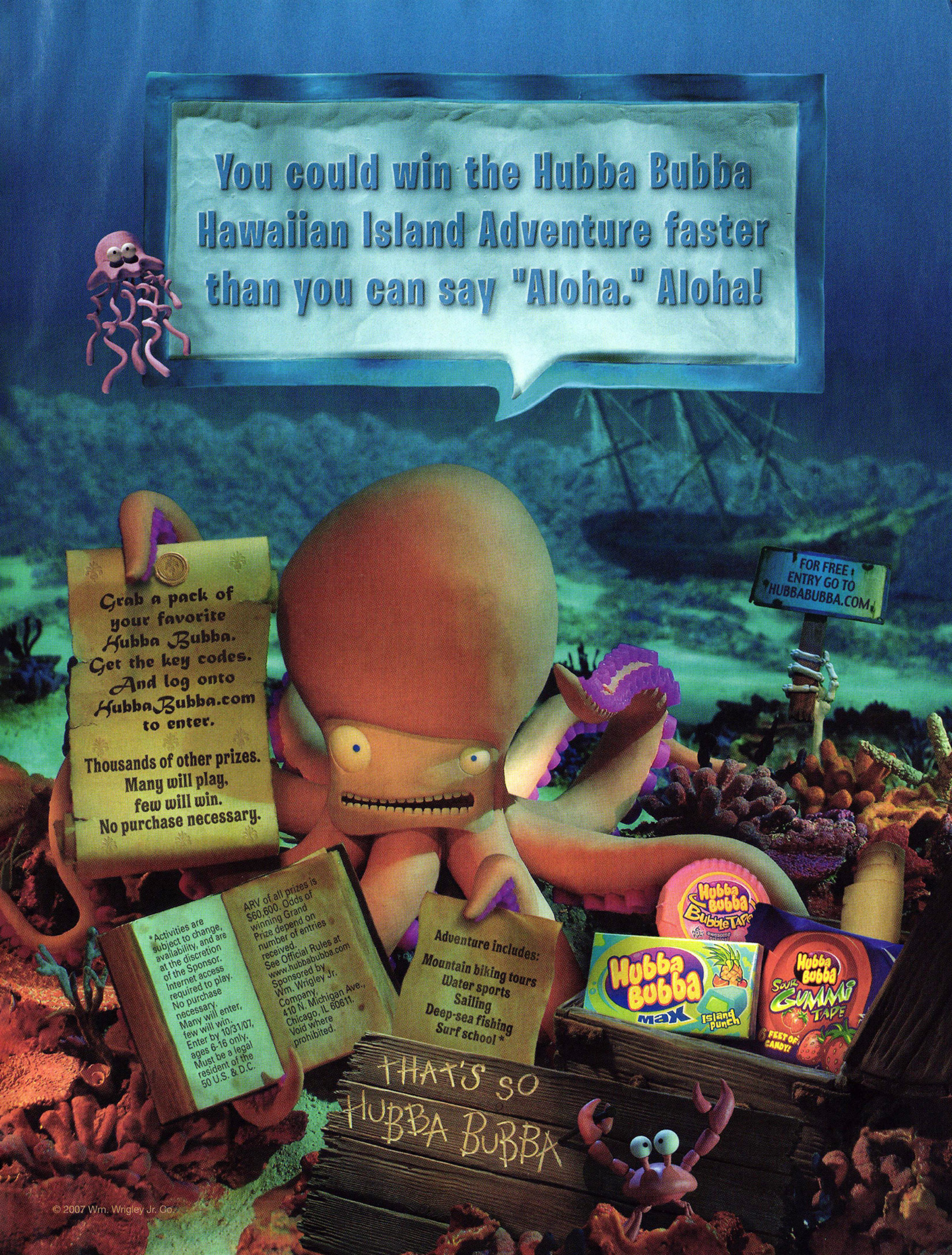


If you happen to lose your stylus, you can borrow mine. Or you can just use my bill. Pg. 50

Gorgi's sending AIR TRANSPORTS to our HQ! If he captures our FLAG, Commander, it's game over!

FOLLOW
RECON
ALL

Now if only they'd make a camouflage Wii to match!



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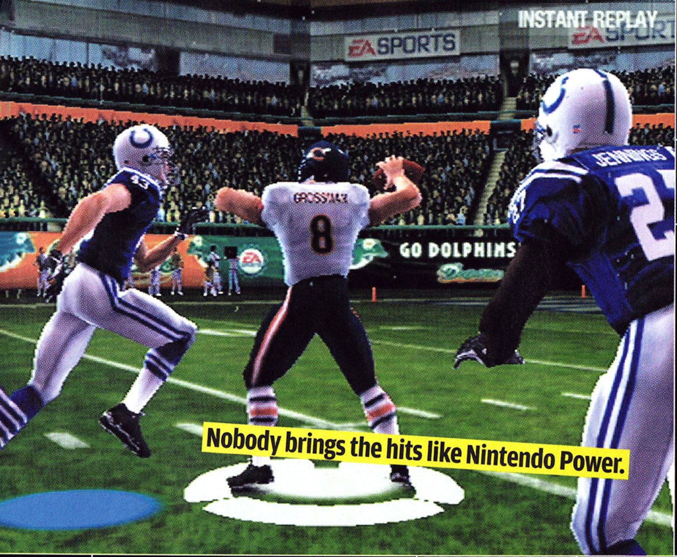
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EA SPORTS
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GO DOLPHINS
JENNINGS

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I'm Sexy Rex Grossman. You gotta unleash the dragon.

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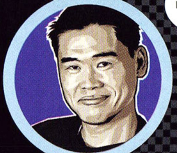
This might be the ickiest screenshot ever.

VITAL
72
Time limit
01:38:15
score
06700
16 CHAIN.
Ok
SCALPEL
FORCEPS

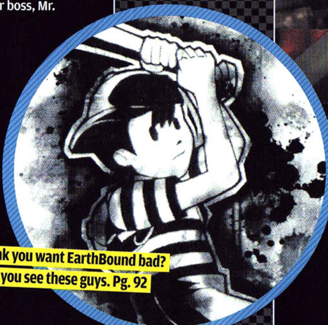
A wood splinter has pierced the bicep... We need to carefully extract it.


I'm just upset they never let me make an InafuneMan boss.

27
Actual gas mask not required.

20462
MISSION LEVEL 1
LIFE
GS
PLAYER 1
100
100
19

You're prolly gonna need one of these babies.



You think you want EarthBound bad? Wait 'til you see these guys. Pg. 92

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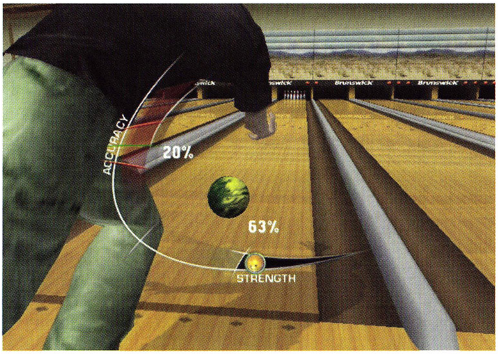

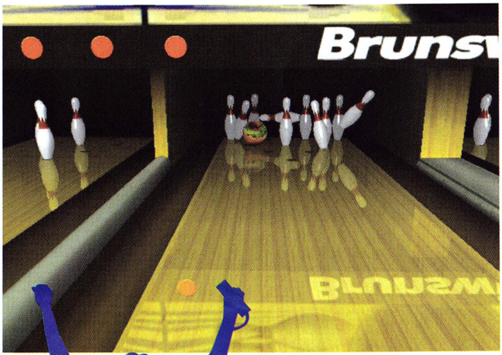

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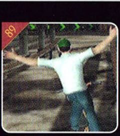
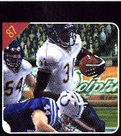
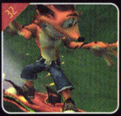
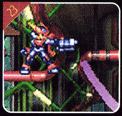
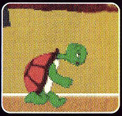
DS = Nintendo DS
SNES = Super Nintendo Entertainment System
VC = Virtual Console
Wii = Wii











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Pulse

ART & ARTISTRY

I don't intend to step into the ongoing debate about whether video games should be considered art or not, but I do think it's fair to say that a great deal of artistry goes into the creation of good games. This month's cover feature presents the best and deepest look to date into Super Mario Galaxy, and as you peruse the screenshots I think you'll find that the imagery is clearly the work of artists with a passion for what they do. Perhaps an even better illustration of this idea is our special Metroid Prime 3: Corruption gallery of concept art provided by Retro Studios. Consider the time, skill, and creativity behind each of the drawings, and keep in mind that these beautiful works are just concepts to aid in the creation of the game's 3-D graphics—you'll begin to understand the truly staggering amount of labor and love that these development teams put into their games. I stand in awe of their accomplishments, and I hope you enjoy them.

This month's Nintendo Power brings you a wide variety of stories, including our top picks from E3, and preview features on Battalion Wars 2 for Wii, and Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day, Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck, and Sonic Rush Adventure for DS. We profile Keiji Inafune, the father of Mega Man, dig up classic codes for Virtual Console games, and have a conversation with Pac-Man's creator. It really is about pizza! Who knew? All that and more.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

SEGA DOES WHAT . . .

As a classic Sega Genesis player, I am outraged by the fact that in the Wii Channels column you would have Ecco the Dolphin and Kid Chameleon on a list and not chosen as a staff pick [Volume 218]. Those two games are among the best games the Genesis had to offer. To this day both of those games remain on my top 10 list of Genesis games. They both had amazing gameplay and were a blast to play. Both games were really challenging to beat, too. To this day I still can't beat Kid Chameleon. The graphics for both games were amazing for their time. You need to seriously think before you do things like this. I'm starting to think you guys were on something when you chose Air Zonk and Bloody Wolf over Ecco and Kid Chameleon.

Robert O.
via the Internet

Hey, we love dolphins, too—we even have the bumper stickers to prove it. But we gotta spread the love to the TurboGrafx games—they hold up surprisingly well.

DIPPIN' DOTS

In the Game Watch Forecast list you show DS Air as having only two dots, meaning it's still in development. But I saw it on sale (and it was not a pre-order) on Amazon.com a month ago. Also, you can watch videos of DS Air on Youtube.

T.J. H.
via the Internet

DS Air made it to E3 in 2006, but we haven't heard anything about it since, and it definitely hasn't been released.

IT'S-A . . . YOU?

I just beat Mario Party 8 a few days ago, and as I watched the credits go by, I noticed a name: Steven Grimm. I remember his name from old issues of NP. His name was in the character voices section for Mario Party 8; do you have any idea which character he voiced?

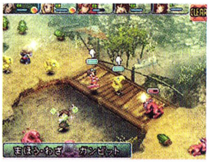
Will S.
via the Internet

It is the same Steven Grimm. He's moved on to bigger and better things around Nintendo. He wouldn't fess up to which voice he did, however.

REVENANT BEAUTY

I was watching a trailer for Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings online and I thought to myself, why give a great game like a new Final Fantasy title Game Boy Advance-quality graphics when it could have great 3D graphics like the remake of Final Fantasy III? You guys probably don't know the answer to this but I thought I might as well ask.

Sam H.
via the Internet



You're gonna tell us that these look like Game Boy Advance graphics? Trust us—your mind will be changed after reading next month's issue.

THE NAME GAME

I recently downloaded Ninja Gaiden and Street Fighter 2 Turbo (both great games, by the way), and I noticed that both games use the names Ryu and Ken. In Ninja Gaiden you are Ryu and your father is Ken, and in Street Fighter Ryu and Ken are two similar characters. Did Capcom really like that game or is it a huge coincidence?

Bryan C.
via the Internet

It's just a big coincidence, Bryan. They're common words in Japanese—Ryu means dragon and Ken means sword. Also, Ryu and Ken were in the first Street Fighter game, which predates Ninja Gaiden.

Over the years, I have noticed that some of the Pokémon have rather obscure name origins, but I don't think any of them compare to this one. My father is a huge fan of Westerns, and not long ago we were watching the old John Wayne film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. Believe it or not, in this old film, I believe I have discovered the origin of the names Phampy and Donphan: John Wayne's character is named Tom Doniphan, and his sidekick is named Pompy. Either someone at Nintendo was watching this old movie and slightly altered the names to make them more elephant-like (to correspond to the creature's appearance), or it's the biggest coincidence in video game history.

Taylor C.
via the Internet

Hey, we don't have any beef with the Duke (and especially not with his awesome co-star Lee Marvin), but we're pretty sure it's just a coincidence. We're impressed by your powers of observation, however!

SUPER MARIO WAX

Sometimes when I'm playing a DS game that uses the stylus a lot I start cleaning my ear with the stylus. I have to admit that the end of the stylus is pretty good for this purpose, but for some reason my family sees it as gross. I wonder whether Nintendo designed the stylus not only for use with the touch screen, but cleaning my ears, too.

Will S.
via the Internet

We have to side with your familiy here: that is one of the more disgusting things we've heard.

MISSING PROFILE

I was reading issue 218's power profile on Eiji Aonuma and I was looking forward to your last question that you asked in your first two profiles asking what superpower would you want but, it was not there. So why didn't you ask him that question?

Ptimpani
via the Internet

Actually, we did; we just didn't print it. Much like Koji Kondo and Keiji Inafune, Mr. Aonuma wishes he could skip through time.

WISE BEYOND YEARS

I read Chris B.'s interesting letter in Volume 219. However, his grandpa was not the oldest Zelda fan. I am 78, and I have been playing Nintendo regularly for almost 20 years. The original Zelda was the second game I owned, in 1988, and is still my favorite. I own every Nintendo system except DS (I'm not quite steady enough to use the handhelds now, but I still play a lot of the Game Boy games using the GameCube's Game Boy Player). In addition to the original Zelda, my all-time favorites are Super Metroid and the Dragon Warrior series. Right now I'm in the middle of Super Paper Mario on Wii—it's great. I've been a full-time subscriber to Nintendo Power starting with the premier issue July-August 1988, and have the complete collection on shelves in the basement. I'll bet you receive messages from players even older than me, but not nearly as loyal.

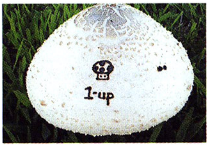
Cort H.
via the Internet

Actually, Cort, you probably have most of the people that write to Pulse beat on both fronts. Thanks for writing—it means a lot to us to hear from the folks who have been with us from the beginning.

FUN WITH FUNGI

I was just screwing around with a magnifying glass and a couple of mushrooms out in my backyard, and my brother gave me the idea to burn Mario-esque mushrooms onto them. Here they are. You wouldn't believe how hard it is to hold the stupid thing steady enough to draw a straight line!

Daddygame
via the Internet



How frightfully awesome is that? Now try it on the back of an ant.

THE SOUNDS OF SONIC

I'm a big fan of both the Super Mario Bros. series and the Sonic the Hedgehog series. In the past, I have enjoyed the high-quality games that both of these franchises have produced. Upon hearing Nintendo and Sega's announcement of Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games for the Nintendo Wii and Nintendo DS, I cried tears of joy. I've been dreaming for years of Mario and Sonic starring in a game together. However, I am very concerned about the voice cast that will be used for this game. I'm confident that Charles Martinet will reprise his role as Mario and do a fine job, but I'm more concerned about the voice actors that will be used for Sonic and his friends. I've felt that Ryan Drummond was the perfect voice for Sonic in Sonic Adventure. But when Shadow the Hedgehog came out in 2005 he and all the other original voice actors were replaced by the voice cast from the TV show *Sonic X* to maintain consistency between the show and the games. Ever since then, the Sonic games haven't been nearly the same. Now that *Sonic X* is over, Sonic fans would be most grateful if Sega would rehire Ryan Drummond and the original voice cast from the Sonic games to reprise their respective roles. Ryan Drummond has stated that he simply loved voicing Sonic, and would take the job up again in a heartbeat. Please, help us get the true Sonic back in time.

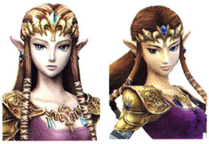
Rachel P.
via the Internet

We've never been huge fans of any of Sonic's voices, but we can understand the passion, Rachel—we can't fathom anyone else besides Charles Martinet working Mario's famed pipes.

BRUNETTE BRAWLER

I have been checking up on Smash Bros. Dojo lately and I saw the new Zelda. Everything seemed to be in order until I saw her hair. It struck me as odd that she would suddenly change from her normal blonde hair color to a brunette. Does this have some meaning to it? Or did Nintendo just change it for the sake of changing it?

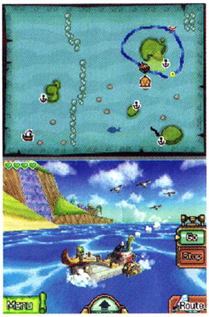
Zachary B.
via the Internet

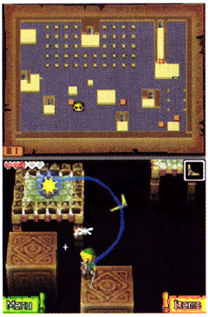


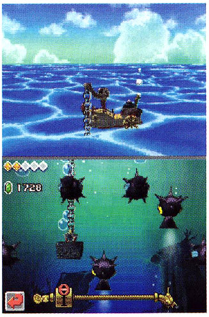
It's true: Zelda's lost her blonde highlights for her big appearance in Brawl. The character designers felt that it was time to tone back her look a little bit.

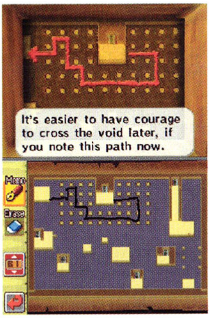
OOPS!

In Volume 219's The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass article, we had a little booboo with some of the screenshots, and that's just not right. To atone for the error of our ways, we wanted to run the screenshots again in all their glory. Enjoy!









It's easier to have courage to cross the void later, if you note this path now.

The thought of online multiplayer not being in Brawl greatly scares me so much that I decided to write, begging for the integration of online play. All I want to say is that online multiplayer would make this the best game of all time. Without it, it would be just another Smash Bros. game. Please think of the people and take all the time necessary for Brawl to have online play. It is the destiny of Brawl to become one with the Wii and be the ruler of all games to ever be made. But it can only fulfill its divine decree by having online multiplayer.

Cameron V.
via the Internet

While we agree that the inclusion of an online multiplayer mode would be awesome, it's hardly time to push the panic button. We haven't heard one way or the other, but we'll report it when we do. Also, listen to yourself: "It would be just another Smash Bros. game." Are you serious? It would be just another iteration of one of the best new series in the past 10 years? Wouldn't that be a shame!

TIME TO VISIT A PSYCHIC-TYPE THERAPIST

I'm feeling depressed. I've caught all the Legendaries (including all forms of Deoxys), all the Kanto, Hoenn, and Sinnoh Pokémon, and I'm rounding up the last of the Johto Pokémon. I should feel proud that all my life-long Pokémon trading and catching is finally reaching its peak, but when I finish up my Johto Pokedex, there's nothing left to do! It's sad to see all those years of collecting come to a close. I hope that someone out there understands what I'm going through.

Brett W.
via the Internet

We're not sure whether to congratulate you or tease you mercilessly. Let's just hope you find other worthwhile endeavors in your life, and leave it at that.

GALACTIC FLOP?

As excited as I am for a new Mario platformer, Super Mario Galaxy just doesn't look like a good successor in the series. I mean, Super Mario 64 was so endearing because you could run through sunny, happy worlds with wide-open fields, bash baddies, scale castles, slide down mountains, and swim in bodies of water while frantically trying to avoid being eaten by big fish. As I watch the Super Mario Galaxy trailers, I see Mario walking upside down and sideways on tiny, spherical planets, and jumping to and fro in the dark, scowling emptiness of the vast outer space. Everyone raves and rants about how excited they are. Am I the only one who feels this way?

Max R.
via the Internet

Yes, you're the only one. We've played a lot of Galaxy already—all those fun activities you mentioned? You'll get the same feeling with this one, too. Trust us.

MOLD, FREEZE, MISSILE

I'm a big fan of the Metroid series, so I made a Jello Metroid and it turned out quite delicious. It's made from lime jello, strawberries, and gummy orange candy. Unfortunately, it does not bestow Hyper Laser powers after being consumed (perhaps it needs more sugar). I'm looking forward to Prime 3! Props to Retro Studios for transitioning Metroid from an awesome 2-D series.

Claire
via the Internet

Oh, my. That is just about the coolest thing that the Pulse column has witnessed since the last Mr. T. photo we ran.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Do you remember in Volume 208 when you did a review for Harvest Moon DS? In the last sentence of the review you said that you guys are still waiting for a good Harvest Moon for the DS. I think your wait is over: They're coming out with a new Harvest Moon game called Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon. You still get to farm and get married and all that stuff, but the animals are monsters that you can catch for your farm. It looks and sounds pretty good, huh?

Chris L.
via the Internet

We got ourselves a regular Jimmy Olsen here! The next thing you'll try to tell us is that there's a new Mario game just around the corner.

WE IGNORE A LOT WORSE QUESTIONS THAN THIS

Why does the staff at Nintendo Power keep ignoring my questions about an Animal Crossing for the Wii? Is it that you guys don't know anything or are you sworn to secrecy on pain of death? Either way I think you should give us Animal Crossing fans a little something to look forward to, if it is in your power (pardon the pun) to do so.

Cuthbert
via the Internet

We've stared death in the eye and we still don't know anything about a new Animal Crossing game. Sorry.

GETTIN' MEDIEVAL

I recently saw a medieval reenactment and was discussing it with some friends. We think that there should be a Wii Medieval. Imagine using your Mii in a jousting competition or in an archery contest. There are plenty of great sports and competitions from medieval times that would be a lot of fun with the Wii remote.

Erik H.
via the Internet

NO HABLA ESPAÑOL

How can I convince my parents to let me try Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition? My best ideas are that it's a free Spanish lesson, and it also teaches foreign relations and improves problem-solving skills. I don't think anyone will fall for the "wholesome as Brain Age" approach, though. Can you guys help?

Pat E.
via the Internet

There's not much we can do. If your mom says no, that's pretty much the end of discussion until they make a Resident Evil: Brain Age Edition for you two to share.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

Just to add to the "Quarters for Jetpacks" jar, in Volume 218 in the Soulcalibur Legends article, you mentioned how some sounds can be heard from the Wii remote's microphone. But the Wii remote has no microphone; it has a speaker. You wouldn't be able to hear anything from a microphone.

Eric S.
via the Internet

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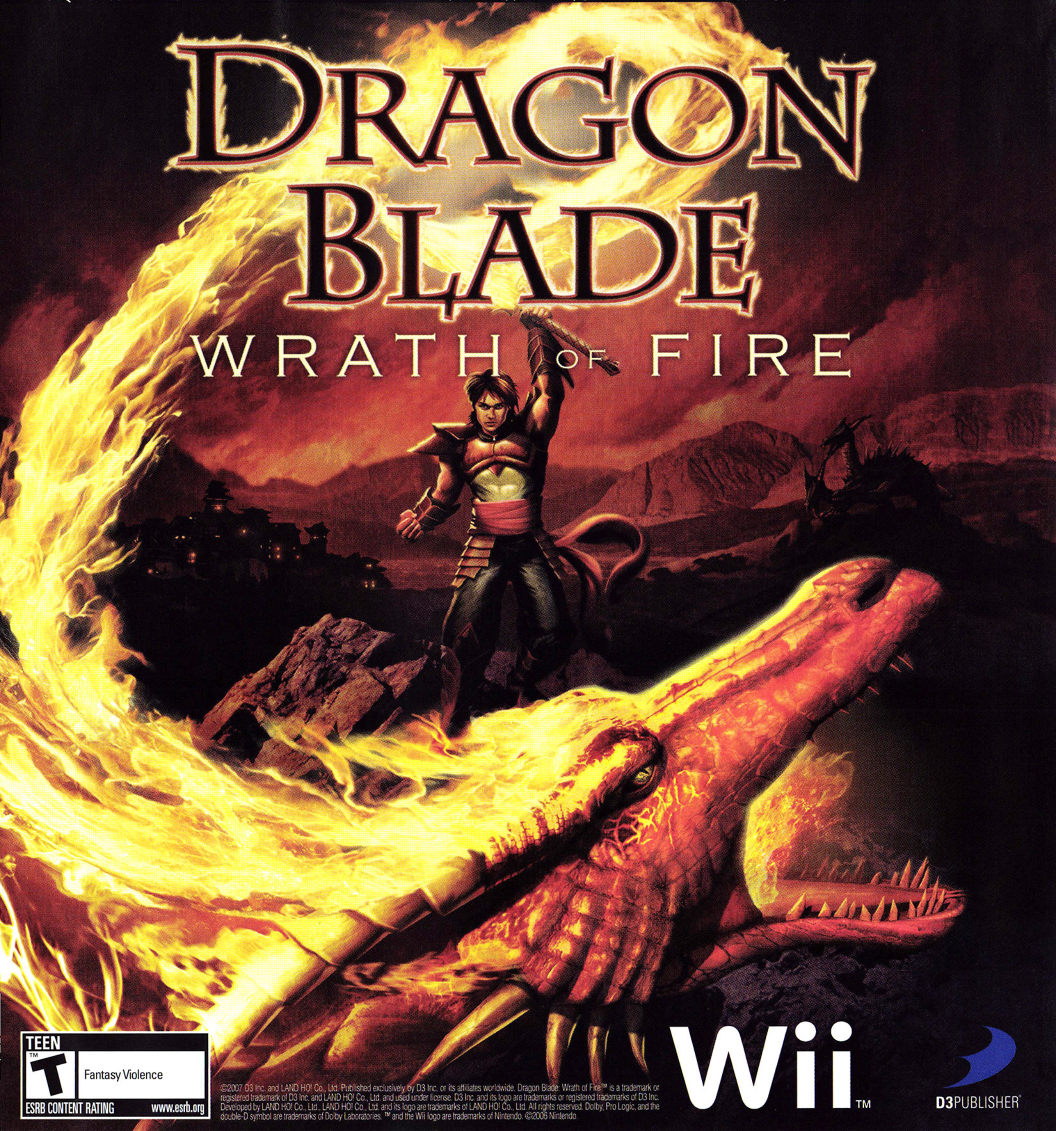

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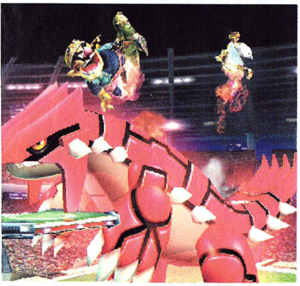


>Wii

1 Super Smash Bros. Brawl
2 Metroid Prime 3: Corruption
3 Super Mario Galaxy
4 Mario Kart Wii
5 Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles

>NINTENDO DS

1 The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
2 Mario Party DS
3 Sonic Rush Adventure
4 Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations
5 Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates

TOP SELLERS

>Wii

Whether they're die-hard Pokémon fans or just interested in the new connectivity features, gamers flocked to Pokémon Battle Revolution.

1 Mario Party 8
2 Wii Play
3 Pokémon Battle Revolution
4 Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition
5 Super Paper Mario
6 Big Brain Academy: Wii Degree
7 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
8 The Bigs
9 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07
10 Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End

TOP SELLERS

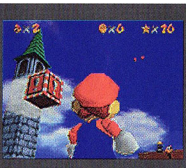
>NINTENDO DS

There hasn't been a lot of movement recently on the DS charts thanks to a handful of steadfast titles at the top of the list.

1 Pokémon Diamond
2 Pokémon Pearl
3 New Super Mario Bros.
4 Mario Kart DS
5 Nintendo DS Browser
6 Naruto: Ninja Council 3
7 Hannah Montana
8 Nintendogs: Dalmatian and Friends
9 Diddy Kong Racing
10 Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day

>VIRTUAL CONSOLE—N64 DOWNLOADS TO DATE

The libary of N64 titles on Virtual Console isn't as robust as those for the other platforms, but the games represented on the list are nothing short of phenomenal. Looks like people are brushing up on their Mario skills as Galaxy approaches.



1 Super Mario 64
2 Mario Kart 64
3 The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
4 Star Fox 64
5 Paper Mario

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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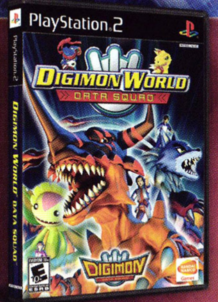

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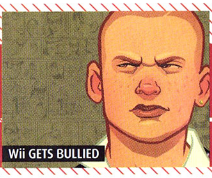
A NEW SYMPHONIA

FIGURINE FANTASIES



Wii GETS BULLIED

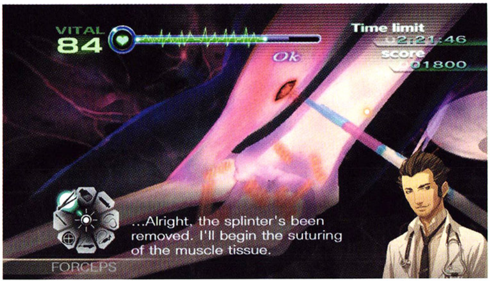
FUN WITH SCALPELS!

Follow-Up Visit

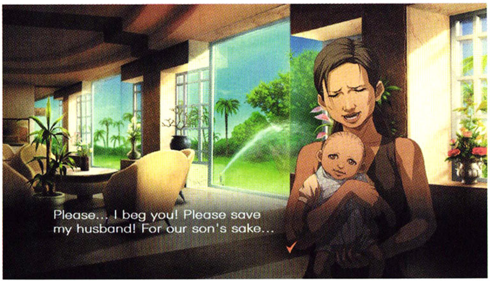
Scrub up and grab your Wii remote. Atlus is sending us back to the ER for an all-new installment in its acclaimed medical saga with Trauma Center: New Blood.

If you're like us—always wanted to try your hand at heart surgery but couldn't be bothered with little things like medical school—then the Trauma Center series has been just what the doctor ordered. This holiday season, the clinical fun continues with the Wii-exclusive Trauma Center: New Blood. Unlike last year's Second Opinion (which was simply a remake of the original DS game), this installment features an all-new story, characters, and operations. It also introduces a two-player cooperative mode in which you and a friend must work together to save the lives of your virtual patients (so try to get along for once!).

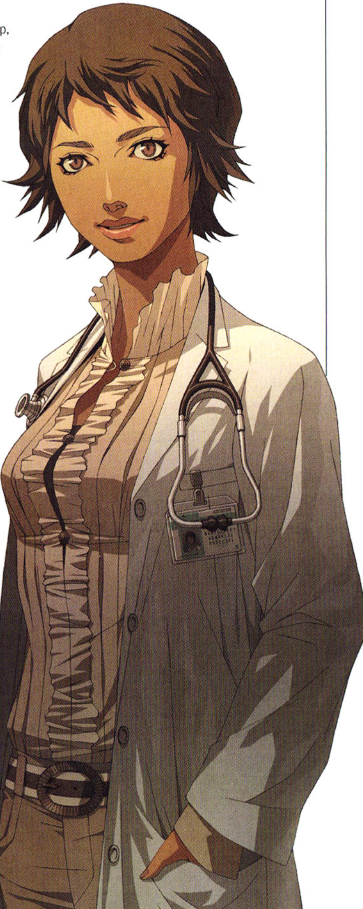
As always, the game mixes plenty of over-the-top, anime-inspired drama with the surgical hijinx. You play Dr. Markus Vaughn, a compassionate physician who's dedicated his life to helping those in need from his remote hospital in Alaska. When the facility is shut down, Dr. Vaughn and his partner, Dr. Valeria Blaylock, are forced to join Concordia Medical Institute, where politics and image come before patients' health. There the two are recruited into a top-secret government organization called Caduceus, where they learn of a shocking conspiracy that will rock the medical world. —Steve T.



...Alright, the splinter's been removed. I'll begin the suturing of the muscle tissue.



Please... I beg you! Please save my husband! For our son's sake...

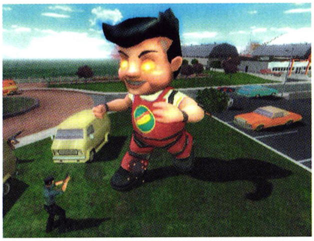


ILLICIT ALIEN

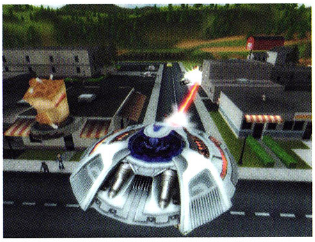
Big Willy Style

Assume the role of an alien invader as THQ's successful series Destroy All Humans! comes to Wii—with a huge new addition.

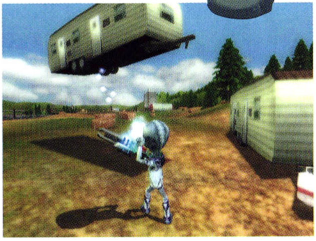
Sometimes it's good to be bad. Case in point—THQ's tongue-in-cheek Destroy All Humans! franchise, in which you play as a smart-mouthed alien who'd like nothing more than to pluck the brains from each and every member of the human race. In early 2008 the series will make its way to Wii with the release of Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed. While protagonist Crypto the Furon can wreak havoc on foot and in his UFO as in previous installments of the series, Big Willy Unleashed also allows him to jump into a prototype alien mech called Big Willy (disguised as a fast food-restaurant mascot) to really pulverize those puny human fleshbags. Virtually indestructible, Big Willy throws cars, destroys buildings, and activates deadly burp and flatulence attacks—perfect for decimating the game's large, open, '70s-themed environments. Even when you're not riding Big Willy you'll have plenty of destructive options, including a disintegrator ray, an anal probe, a zombie gun, and a ball of lightning. Thanks to motion-based controls and point-and-shoot control over Crypto's weapons, Big Willy Unleashed could be the most immersive Destroy All Humans! game yet. —CHRIS H.



Look at that hair. With a 'do like that, you can tell that Big Willy isn't fooling around.



Having a rough day? Then take to the skies and annihilate a town with your UFO.



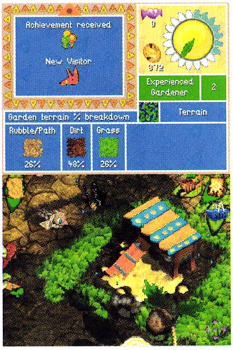
Crypto's got telekinetic powers, too—great for levitating mobile homes and the like.

VIVA DS

Piñata Non Grata?

Oh, contraire! The diminutive DS is big-hearted enough to welcome all games no matter their pedigree, including Microsoft's DS version of Viva Piñata.

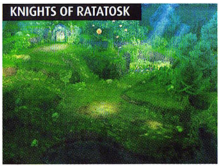
One of the things that makes Rare games rare is the length of time that they spend in development. Diddy Kong Racing for DS was in development for just over 1,000 years (or so it seems) and the latest effort, Viva Piñata (VP) for DS, will follow on the heels of its Xbox 360 predecessor by at least a year. The good news is that the mini VP features all the candy-filled pets and activities from the original game, plus new beasts. But the biggest difference is the touch-screen controls for designing, commanding, and protecting your animals. And the VP community can put their pets on worldwide parade via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. As for the game itself, picture a brightly colored garden in which you interact with comical beasts—a sort of Animal Crossing/The Sims lovechild, if you will. —SCOTT P.

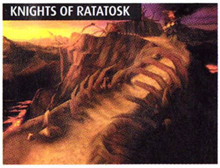


NEWS FROM JAPAN!

Role Reprisals

Two of the biggest names in role-playing make a splash this month as Namco Bandai unveils new Tales games for Wii and DS, while Square Enix announces a trio of Dragon Quest remakes.


KNIGHTS OF RATATOSK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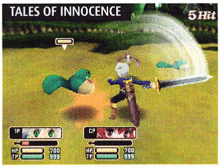
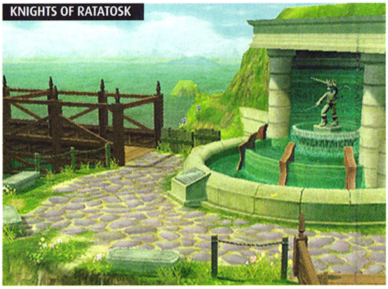

TALES OF INNOCENCE

A Tale of Two Tales

Namco Bandai has revealed two new Tales RPGs for Nintendo platforms in Japan. Tales of Symphonia: Knights of Ratatosk for Wii follows three years after the original Tales of Symphonia game for GCN. Many of the locales will be familiar to veterans of the first game, and there will be plenty of new dungeons and towns to explore, as well. Lloyd and other memorable characters will even make an appearance. A new monster-breeding and -capturing element should add an interesting twist, too.

Also slated for release is Tales of Innocence for DS. Expect top-notch 3-D graphics throughout.

Namco hasn't said whether these games will make it to North American shores, but given the reception that the first Tales of Symphonia received here, we wouldn't be surprised to see them. —Chris S.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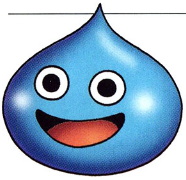


The Quests Begin Anew

At the company's annual financial meeting back in May, Square Enix president Yoichi Wada casually mentioned the possibility of Dragon Quest remakes appearing on DS. In a recent issue of Japanese magazine *Shonen Jump*, the company finally confirmed that Dragon Quest IV, V, and VI are indeed coming to the Nintendo handheld, with part IV slated to hit Japanese shelves this winter. The titles will sport a new 3-D look, but other than that, details are scarce. No word yet on whether any of the games will see a North American release. —Steve T.

OUT OF LEFT FIELD

Race Rocket

The developer behind Excitebike 64 returns to the raceway for exclusive and explosive Wii motorcycle title Nitrobike.

Published by Ubisoft and developed by Left Field Productions, the first dirt-bike game for the Wii console has you holding the remote as if it were a handlebar, tilting it to turn and rotating it forward and back while your bike is in the air to adjust your pitch. A gameplay video shown at E3 displays blazing bikes, big air, and extreme tricks that lead to nitro-fueled bursts of speed. The game's 20 tracks range from traditional arena courses to urban environments with loose dirt over pavement. Once you've mastered tight turns and open-throttle runs to the finish line against a field of AI-controlled bikes, you can take on up to three opponents in split-screen races or go up against a world of racers online. The checkered flag waves this fall. —George S.

1/3
CURRENT LAP
00:14.36
LAP TIME
4/10
POSITION
MPH
49

CALL TO ACTION FIGURES

Powered-Up Plastic

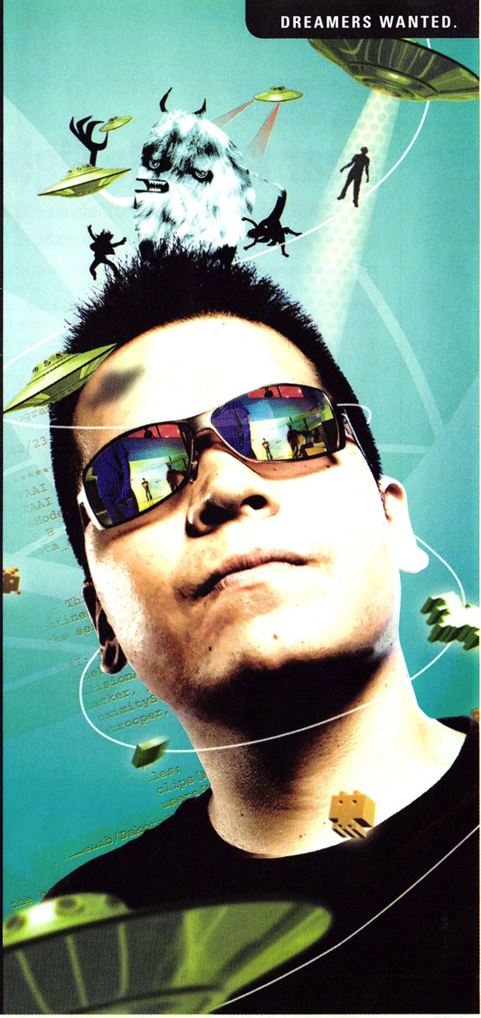
Toys based on Final Fantasy, Street Fighter, Darkstalkers, and more are coming soon to a store near you.

If you're the kind of gamer who doesn't just *play* video games, but eats, sleeps, and breathes them, and displays their accompanying merchandise in your bedroom or office, you'd best start clearing off some shelf space for the products arriving in the coming months. Square Enix recently announced its plans to open a web store at www.square-enix-shop.com, where you can buy, among other items, figurines based on the DS remake of Final Fantasy III and action figures based on assorted Final Fantasy and Kingdom Hearts titles. Plush dolls, jewelry, and other goodies will be available as well.

Capcom fans also have a lot to look forward to. Street Fighter Revolution Series 1 from SOTA Toys should be out before year's end, featuring plastic renditions of favorite characters E. Honda, Zangief, Dhalsim, and R. Mika. SOTA's also working on a line of figures based on Capcom's Darkstalkers fighting franchise. The first series is scheduled to include Demitri the vampire and Lord Raptor the zombie, while the second series will include succubi sisters Morrigan and Lilith, but SOTA won't release the toys until they generate enough fan interest—head to www.sotatoys.com to show your support. —**Chris H.**

Awww, aren't they cute? Soon the versatile heroes of Final Fantasy III will be all yours in the form of Trading Arts figurines.

Demitri from Darkstalkers and Dhalsim from Street Fighter II are just a couple of the Capcom characters on the way from SOTA Toys.



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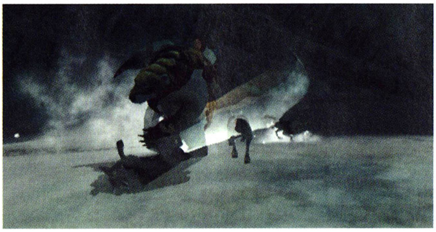
PLAY LIKE A LITTLE GIRL

Bear Knuckle Fighting

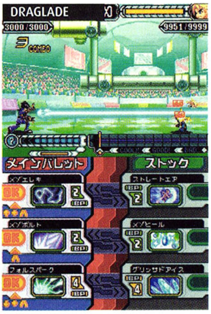
The Golden Compass points to Wii and DS this holiday season with Sega's puzzle-laden, bear-brawlin', shape-shiftin' adventure game.

The Golden Compass, due out this holiday season, is the latest megabucks movie adaptation of a beloved classic for young readers, and no one's jaw will drop when we reveal that a related video game is in the works. If the game were about the female protagonist Lyra and her adorable shape-shifting daemon, Pan, it would be interesting, no doubt—but probably not high on your list of must-have games. But before you move on to the next news item, let's talk about the other playable character: Iorek the armored polar bear. Using Iorek, you can swat down supernatural foes with your imposing claws in between Lyra's puzzle-solving adventuring. Sega promises that the game will move beyond the scope of the movie to include locales that appear only in Phillip Pullman's brilliant fantasy novel. The title will reach store shelves in December. —**Drew W.**

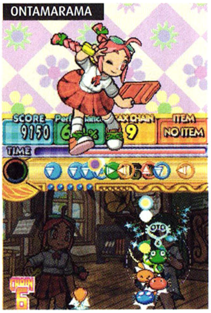


Hey, doggy: try the bear claws—they're delicious! Big bully Iorek Byrnison lays the smack down against the forces of evil in The Golden Compass.

MOVIN' AND GROOVIN'



DRAGLADE



ONTAMARAMA

Atlus Has Rhythm

The music's the thing in Atlus's latest DS projects: J-pop music game Ontamarama and beat-based fighter Draglade.

The world could use a little more harmony. Maybe that's why the bizarrely named Ontamarama and Draglade—the latest DS games announced by Atlus—are both centered around music. Developed by Noise Factory, Ontamarama is a rhythm game featuring an original J-pop soundtrack. While you tap characters called Ontama on the touch screen, you must also push specific directions on the Control Pad in sync with the music. Draglade, developed by Dimps, strikes a different chord. In this anime-inspired action-fighting game, you'll control fighters called Grappers and use Beat Combos—attacks timed to a musical beat—to best your foes. You can also battle other players over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Both games should be out before the end of 2007. —**Chris H.**

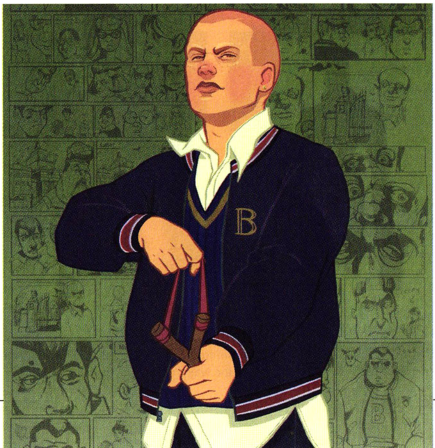
ATOMIC WEDGIE

Rockstar Rocks Wii

Got a hankering for a little table tennis? Or maybe you feel like dishing out a nasty noogie. Either way, Rockstar Games has what you're looking for.

Acclaimed—and somewhat notorious—game studio Rockstar has recently announced plans to bring two big titles to Wii. The mischievous sandbox game Bully: Scholarship Edition, an updated version of the 2006 sleeper hit for PS2 is arriving this winter. You play as new kid Jimmy Hopkins, a 15-year old with a mean streak and dead aim with a slingshot. Trouble seems to follow you wherever you go, but instead of sitting back and letting others pick on you, you take matters into your own hands. Rockstar says that Scholarship Edition will have additional new content; we'll have to wait to see what kind of goodies are in store.

The Wii is also getting Rockstar Games Presents Table Tennis, a title that first came out on Xbox360 but seems like a natural for the Wii. Look for Table Tennis on store shelves sometimes this fall. —**Chris S.**



GAME WATCH FORECAST

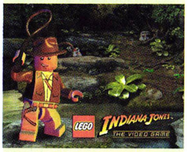
If you've always wanted to learn French, improve your math skills, or discover what it takes to become a figure skater, than this month's additions to the forecast prove that dreams really do come true.

BITS OF TID

Keeping Up with Jones

LucasArts announces a new Indy on the way.

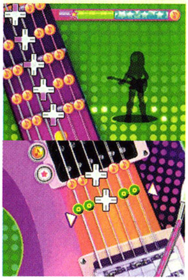
The LEGO *Star Wars* development team at Traveller's Tales is turning the world's most famous archaeologist into a LEGOesque hero. Coming next summer, the game will tread in the footsteps of Indy's three blockbuster movies.



Hannah's Encore

Hannah Montana: Music Jam for DS ain't just for tweeny boppers.

Sure, kid sisters will enjoy the adventure and minigames, but everyone with a musical itch will dig this title's incredible music jam mode. A four-player multicard session combines lead and rhythm guitars, drums, and bass. Plug the host DS into an amp and you can hold your own concert!



- Announced
- In Development
- Ready for Release

Game Title — Publisher — ●●●
Game Title — Publisher — ●●● — New games added to the list

Wii

Game Title	Publisher	
Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None	The Adventure Company	●●○
Alien Syndrome	Sega	●●●
Avatar: The Last Airbender: The Burning Earth	THQ	●●○
Battalion Wars 2	Nintendo	●●●
Bee Movie Game	Activision	●●○
Ben 10: Protector of Earth	D3PA	●●○
Billy the Wizard	Conspiracy	●●○
Blast Works: Build, Fuse & Destroy	Majesco	●●○
Bleach: Shattered Blade	Sega	●●○
Blitz: The League	Midway	●●○
Boogie	Electronic Arts	●●●
Bratz: The Movie	THQ	●●○
Brothers in Arms: Double Time	Ubisoft	●●○
Bully: Scholarship Edition	Rockstar	●●○
Carnival Games	Global Star	●●●
Cars: Mater-National	THQ	●●○
Code Lyoko	The Game Factory	●●○
Cosmic Family	Ubisoft	●●○
Counter Force	Conspiracy	●●○
Crash of the Titans	Sierra	●●○
Cruis'n	Midway	●○○
CSI: Hard Evidence	Ubisoft	●●○
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party	Konami	●●○
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	Crave	●●○
de Blob	THQ	●●○
Destiny of Zorro	TBD	●●○
Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed	THQ	●●○
Dewy's Adventure	Konami	●●○
Disaster: Day of Crisis	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 3	Atari	●●○
Dragon Blade: Wrath of Fire	D3PA	●●○
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	Square Enix	●●○
EA Playground	Electronic Arts	●●○
Emergency Mayhem	Codemasters	●●○
Endless Ocean	Nintendo	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●○○
FIFA 08	Electronic Arts	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	●●○
Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn	Nintendo	●●○
Fishing Master	Hudson	●●○
Furu Furu Park	Majesco	●●○
Game Party	Midway	●○○
Geometry Wars: Galaxies	Sierra	●●○
George of the Jungle	Crave	●●○
Ghost Squad	Sega	●●○
Godzilla: Unleashed	Atari	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●●○
Guilty Gear XX Accent Core	Aksys	●●○
Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock	Activision	●●○
Harvest Moon Wii*	Natsume	●●○
High School Musical: Sing It!	Disney Int.	●●○
Iron Man	Sega	●●○
Jenga	Atari	●●○
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	THQ	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: The Eternal Night	Sierra	●●○
Legends of the Indy 500	Destineer	●●○
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	Warner Bros. Interactive	●○○
LEGO *Star Wars*: The Complete Saga	LucasArts	●●○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Madden NFL 08	Electronic Arts	●●●
Manhunt 2	Rockstar	●●○
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	Sega	●●○
Medal of Honor Heroes 2	Electronic Arts	●●○
Metroid Prime 3: Corruption	Nintendo	●●●
MLB Power Pros	2K Sports	●●○
Mushroom Men	Gamecock	●○○
MX vs. ATV Untamed	THQ	●○○
MySims	Electronic Arts	●●○
My Word Coach	Ubisoft	●●○
Namco Museum Remix	Namco Bandai	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution	D3PA/Tomy	●●○
NBA Live 08	Electronic Arts	●●○
Need for Speed ProStreet	Electronic Arts	●●○
Nicktoons: Attack of the Toybots	THQ	●●○
NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams	Sega	●●○
Ninjabread Man	Conspiracy	●●○
Nitrobike	Ubisoft	●●○
One Piece: Unlimited Adventure	Namco Bandai	●●○
Opoona	Koei	●●○
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection	Crave	●●○
Project H.A.M.M.E.R.	Nintendo	●●○
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2	Ubisoft	●●○
Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles	Capcom	●●○
Rock 'n Roll Adventures	Conspiracy	●○○
Rockstar Games Presents Table Tennis	Rockstar	●●○
Samurai Warriors Katana	Koei	●●○
Smarty Pants*	Electronic Arts	●●○
Soulcalibur Legends	Namco Bandai	●●○
Space Station Tycoon	Namco Bandai	●●○
Spider-Man: Friend or Foe	Activision	●●○
SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePantis	THQ	●●○
Star Trek: Conquest	Bethesda	●●○
Super Mario Galaxy	Nintendo	●●○
Super Smash Bros. Brawl	Nintendo	●●○
Thrillville: Off the Rails	LucasArts	●○○
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	Electronic Arts	●●●
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	Eidos	●●○
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Activision	●●○
Trauma Center: New Blood	Atlus	●●○
Victorious Boxers	Xseed	●●○
Wii Fit	Nintendo	●●○
World Championship Poker: All In	Crave	●●○
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●○
Zack & Wiki: Quest for Barbaros' Treasure	Capcom	●●○

NINTENDO DS

Game Title	Publisher	
7 Wonders of the Ancient World	Mumbo Jumbo	●●○
Animal Genius	Scholastic	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender: The Burning Earth	THQ	●●○
Backyard Basketball	Atari	●●●
Backyard Football	Atari	●●○
Backyard Hockey	Atari	●●○
Balls of Fury	Destination	●●●
The Bee Game	Midway	●○○
Ben 10: Protector of Earth	D3PA	●○○
Bleach: The Blade of Fate	Sega	●●○
Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day	Nintendo	●●○
Build a Bear	The Game Factory	●●○
California Games	System 3	●●○
Cameltry	TBA	●●○
Cars: Mater-National	THQ	●●○
The Cheetah Girls: Pop Star Sensations	Disney Int.	●●○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Chicken Shoot	Destination	●●○
Chronos Twin	Lexicon	●●○
Contra 4	Konami	●●○
Crash of the Titans	Sierra	●●○
Crayola Treasure Adventures	Crave	●●○
de Blob	THQ	●○○
Dementium: The Ward	Gamecock	●●○
Digimon World: Dawn	Namco Bandai	●●○
Digimon World: Dusk	Namco Bandai	●●○
Disney Princess: Magic Jewels	Disney Int.	●●○
DK: Jungle Climber	Nintendo	●●○
Draglade	Atlus	●●○
Dragon Quest IX*	Square Enix	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker	Square Enix	●●○
Drawn to Life	THQ	●●○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●●○
Final Fantasy IV	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Tactics A2	Square Enix	●●○
Fish Tycoon	Majesco	●●○
Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends: Imagination Invasion	Midway	●●○
Front Mission	Square Enix	●●○
Garfield's Nightmare	The Game Factory	●●●
Geometry Wars: Galaxies	Sierra	●●○
George of the Jungle	Crave	●●○
Godzilla Unleashed	Atari	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●○○
GoPets: Vacation Island	Konami	●●○
Hannah Montana: Music Jam	Disney Int.	●●○
High School Musical: Makin' the Cut	Disney Int.	●●●
Imagine Animal Doctor	Ubisoft	●●○
Imagine Babyz	Ubisoft	●●○
Imagine Fashion Designer	Ubisoft	●●○
Imagine Figure Skater	Ubisoft	●●○
Imagine Master Chef	Ubisoft	●●○
Impossible Mission	System 3	●●○
Indiana Jones 2007*	LucasArts	●○○
Indianapolis 500 Legends	Destineer	●●○
Insecticide	Gamecock	●●○
I Spy: Fun House	Scholastic	●●●
It's a Wonderful World	Square Enix	●●○
Jam Sessions	Ubisoft	●●●
Jewel Quest Expedition	Activision	●●●
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	THQ	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: The Eternal Night	Sierra	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Mario Party DS	Nintendo	●●○
Math Play	Natsume	●●○
Mega Man Star Force	Capcom	●●●
Mega Man ZX Advent	Capcom	●●○
Mushroom Men	Gamecock	●●○
MX vs. ATV Untamed	THQ	●○○
MySims	Electronic Arts	●●○
My French Coach	Ubisoft	●●○
My Life Coach	Ubisoft	●●○
My Spanish Coach	Ubisoft	●●○
My Word Coach	Ubisoft	●●○
Namco Museum DS	Namco Bandai	●●○
Nanostray 2	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Path of the Ninja	D3PA/Tomy	●●○
Need for Speed ProStreet	Electronic Arts	●●○
Nicktoons: Attack of the Toybots	THQ	●●○
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword	Tecmo	●●○
Ontamarama	Atlus	●●○
Operation: Vietnam	Majesco	●●●
Orcs & Elves	Electronic Arts	●○○
Original Frisbee Disc Sports: Ultimate & Golf	Destination	●●○
Panzer Tactics	CDV Software	●●○
Pet Luv Spa & Resort Tycoon	Activision	●●●
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations	Capcom	●●○
Power Play Pool	Conspiracy	●●●
Power Rangers: Super Legends	Disney Int.	●●○
Professor Layton and the Curious Village	Nintendo	●●○
Puzzle de Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2	Ubisoft	●●○
Rhythm 'n Notes	Agetec	●●○
River King: Mystic Valley	Natsume	●●○
Smart Boys Game Room	UFO Int.	●●●
Smart Girls Playhouse	UFO Int.	●●●
Sonic RPG*	Sega	●○○
Sonic Rush Adventure	Sega	●●○
Spelling Challenges and More!	Crave	●●○
Spider-Man: Friend or Foe	Activision	●●○
SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePantis	THQ	●●○
Spy-Q	Eidos	●●○
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	LucasArts	●○○
The Suite Life of Lack & Cody: Circle of Spies	Disney Int.	●●○
Thrillville: Off the Rails	LucasArts	●○○
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	Electronic Arts	●●●
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Activision	●●○
Touch Detective 2 1/2	Atlus	●●○
Turn it Around	Majesco	●●●
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Mortal Kombat	Midway	●●○
Viva Piñata	Microsoft	●●○
Warhammer 40K: Squad Command	THQ	●●○
Wild Petz: Dolphinz	Ubisoft	●●○
The Wild West	Majesco	●●○
Worms: Open Warfare 2	THQ	●●●
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●○
Zoey 101: Field Trip Fiasco	THQ	●●●

* Tentative title

Start saving those pennies for a flood of fall releases.

Bleach: The Blade of Fate Pg. 25
Bleach: Shattered Blade Pg. 25
Crash of the Titans Pg. 32
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 3 Pg. 32
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates Pg. 24
Front Mission Pg. 28
Ghost Squad Pg. 27
Indianapolis 500 Legends Pg. 30
The Legend of Spyro: The Eternal Night Pg. 30
Mario Party DS Pg. 22
Mega Man ZX Advent Pg. 23
NBA Live 08 Pg. 27
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations Pg. 26
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection Pg. 31
Puzzle de Harvest Moon Pg. 24
River King: Mystic Valley Pg. 31

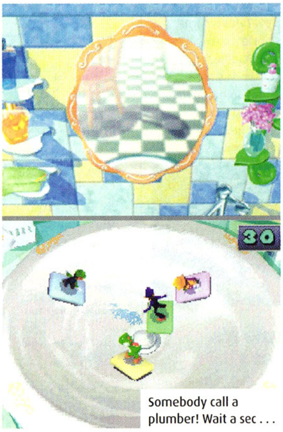
Dice, Dice Baby

>MARIO PARTY DS

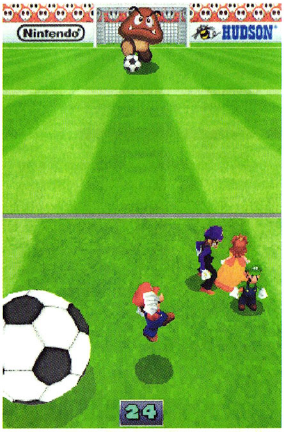
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: HUDSON • RELEASE: FALL 2007

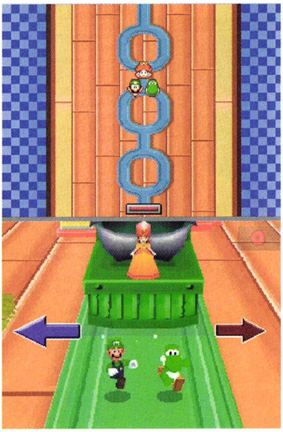
At this point in the history of the Mario/Bowser relationship, you really have to start questioning Mario's judgement. He's either turning a blind eye to his ill-starred personal history with the Koopa king or he's smashed one brick too many with his head. Consider this recent example: in Mario Party DS, Bowser invites Mario and the gang to a party at the castle—and they actually attend! Bowser shrinks his guests down to the size of chess pieces then sends them on their merry way. Since they're already tiny, the heroes may as well play a series of wacky board games, right? Well, right or wrong, that's what they do—in the game's Story mode, anyway. The basic game structure should be comfortable and familiar to fans of the long-running series: each player takes a turn whacking a dice block, then moves the indicated number of spaces across an interactive game board. During your turn, you may buy items that help you get ahead, win coins, lose coins, etc. The ultimate goal is to reach stars, the items that ultimately decide who has won the game. What happens on the board is random, but that's beside the point—Mario Party is all about the minigames at the end of each round of turns.

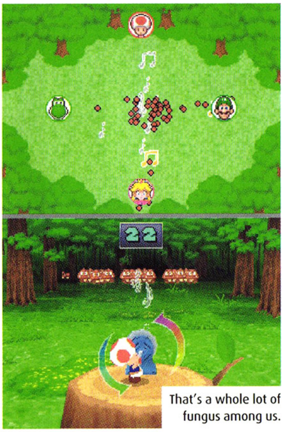
Many of the minigames have a DS-specific twist that breathes new life into the series. For example, you may be asked to scan a room with the Control Pad while you tap color-coded Boos with the stylus or blow into the microphone to freeze your opponents. The board game can be played in Story mode or you can go straight to a multiplayer matchup in Party mode. In Minigame mode you can skip past the dice-rolling and cut to the action in a variety of tournament-style sub-modes. A new addition to the line-up is Puzzle mode, which has nothing to do with minigames. You can choose to play one of one of five Mario-themed games that bear a passing resemblance to Bust-a-Move, Tetris, or Planet Puzzle League, or you can jump into an interesting new matching game called Triangle Twisters. It may be a while before you get to the puzzles, however—there are dozens of minigames to keep you and your friends glued to the game board. Up to four people can play wirelessly using a single game card, so all you'll need to start a party is a few friends and the same number of DS systems. Start dusting off your party hat: Mario Party DS comes out this fall. —Drew W.



Somebody call a plumber! Wait a sec . . .







That's a whole lot of fungus among us.

Boss 'Em Around

>MEGA MAN ZX ADVENT

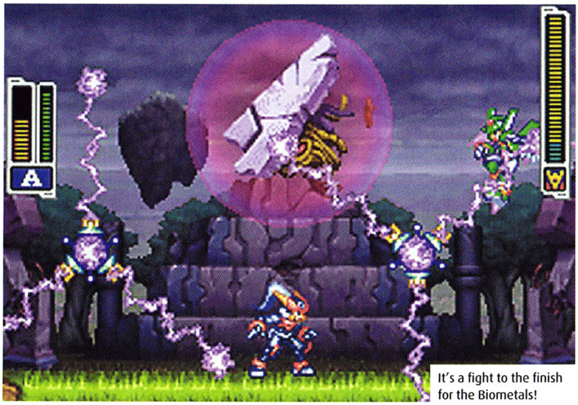
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • RELEASE: OCTOBER 2007

A new breed of Mega Man—created by the fusion of humans and living metals called Biometals—defeated the ambitions of Serpent and his corporation, Slither Inc., in the original Mega Man ZX last year. With multiple Mega Man forms (each with unique special abilities and weapons), two playable heroes, and a vast interconnected world, ZX brought exciting new twists to the challenging, precise, hard-core jump-and-shoot action that Mega Man is best known for. This fall's sequel, Mega Man ZX Advent, is set to take things a few steps further.

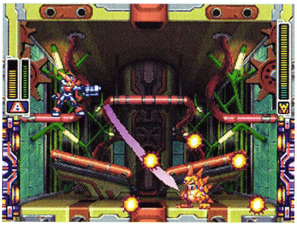
This time out, you can again choose from two heroes: Grey (who excels at rapid-fire attacks) or Ash (who's slower but more powerful than her male counterpart). Though the protagonists are Reploids (advanced robots), not humans, they nonetheless soon merge with Biometal Model A and become the next evolution of Mega Man, complete with wall-climbing abilities, a charge shot, and a new lock-on homing attack. As you proceed through the game's interlinked areas—including undersea caverns, biomechanical forests, and a moving train—to battle the evil Pseudoroid menace, you'll gain more powers, including a total of five Biometal forms and the ability to transform into defeated bosses, each with their own special skills. After you conquer the robotic stag Buckfire, for example, you can assume his form to activate flaming dash attacks that can shatter certain floors and ceilings, and once you've slain the jellyfish called Chronoforce, you can maneuver unimpeded underwater (although he's useless on dry land). Naturally, you'll be able to use your original Reploid form as well when the situation calls for it.

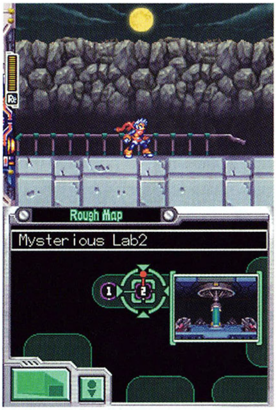
In addition to implementing new game mechanics, Advent strives to refine some of the features from the previous game. Players will be able to switch between the Biometal menu screen and the navigation screen with the push of a touch-screen button, and the map system (one of the few criticisms about the original game) has been enhanced to become much easier to comprehend. Fans of the first ZX will also be glad to know that the game's heroes, Vent and Aile, return in Advent, boasting their familiar sword-swinging ZX powers. Scheming villains Prometheus and Pandora are back, too.

With two difficulty settings (normal and beginner), Advent should prove accessible to gamers of any skill level, and two players can even double up for single-card downloadable minigames or wireless multicard co-op or versus action. This year marks Mega Man's 20th anniversary as a game hero, and Mega Man ZX Advent looks like it'll let fans celebrate in style. —CHRIS H.

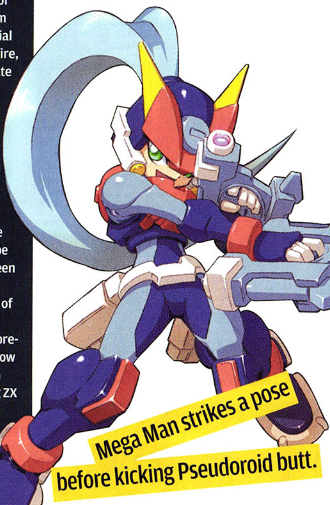


It's a fight to the finish for the Biometals!

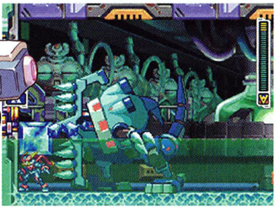


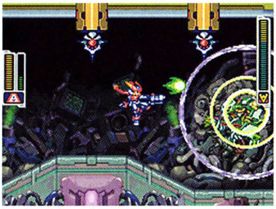


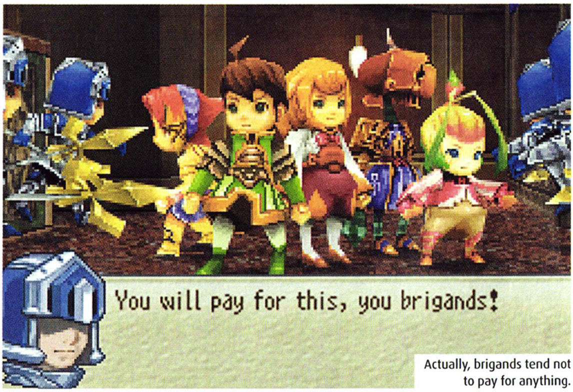
Mysterious Lab2



Mega Man strikes a pose before kicking Pseudoroid butt.







Actually, brigands tend not to pay for anything.

HP 102/154
SP 134/134

259
HP 154/154
SP 134/134

Twist of Fate

>FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES: RING OF FATES

PLATFORM: DS • **PUBLISHER:** SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX • **RELEASE:** SPRING 2008

Though a US release for Ring of Fates is still a long way off, we've managed to garner a few new details on the eagerly anticipated action-RPG. As reported previously, the main quest will be single-player only (unlike the original Crystal Chronicles for GCN), with AI-controlled partners fighting alongside you. Based on how you equip your allies, however, you can alter each one's behavior. One item might encourage its wearer to attack aggressively, for instance, while another will make healing the party his top priority.

The game's multiplayer component consists of a freeplay mode as well as more than 100 special quests that feature both cooperative and competitive elements. Objectives range from the relatively straightforward (racing through a dungeon) to the delightfully quirky (protecting cows from being abducted). Sadly, the game won't include Wi-Fi play (the developers feared that lag would be an issue with so much action onscreen), though you will be able to trade customized moogles online. —STEVE T.

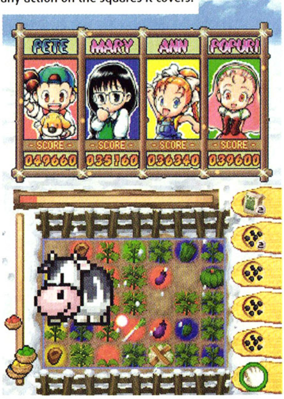
Crops and Robbers

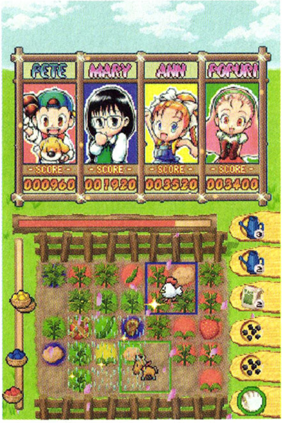
>PUZZLE de HARVEST MOON

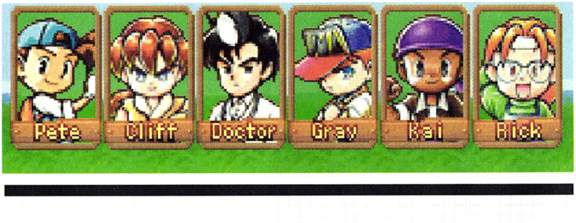
PLATFORM: DS • **PUBLISHER:** NATSUME
DEVELOPER: NATSUME • **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007

Stealing crops and foiling competitors aren't the sort of feel-good activities normally associated with the Harvest Moon franchise, but in Puzzle de Harvest Moon for DS, the workaday farming world gives way to a frantic race against the clock where anything goes. Puzzle action is at the heart of it; players plant seeds on the touch-screen grid, then water them, fertilize them, and harvest the fully grown veggies as quickly as possible to accumulate points. At the same time that you're busting your hump to bring in that carrot crop, one, two, or three CPU- or human-controlled characters are racing to grow and harvest their own color-coded produce. That's where the skullduggery comes in: You can harvest other farmers' crops before they do; you can drop a voracious chicken to gobble up an opponent's seeds; you can deploy a sheep that pulls the wool over your opponents' eyes and limits what they can do for a period of time. You can even employ sneaky strategies, such as sandwiching another player's plants between two of your own, which converts them to your color and makes them twice as valuable at harvest time. Don't let the down-on-the-farm theme fool you—Puzzle de Harvest Moon is as much fun for city slickers as it is for country folk. —SCOTT P.

The presence of a cow will prevent any action on the squares it covers.







Live by the Sword

>BLEACH: SHATTERED BLADE

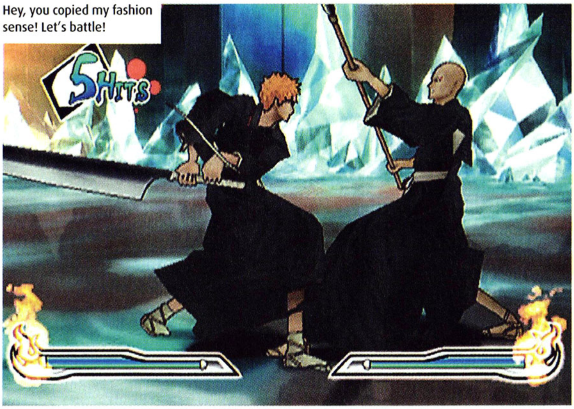
PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** Sega
DEVELOPER: Polygon Magic • **RELEASE:** October 2007

The *Bleach* manga and anime tell the story of a teenage boy named Ichigo Kurosaki who inadvertently inherits the power of a Soul Reaper, enabling him to wield a ridiculously large sword and hunt down all manner of ghosts, demons, and other wayward souls. But you don't need to know any of that to enjoy Sega's one-on-one 3-D fighting game Bleach: Shattered Blade—all you need to do is brandish your Wii remote like a sword. By swinging the remote horizontally or vertically or thrusting it forward, you can execute various standard attacks (repeat the motion for a furious combo), and by holding down the A or B Button while gesturing, you can unleash critical strikes and special moves respectively. Each of the game's 30-plus characters has his or her own distinct moves and superattacks, which they can utilize by filling their Bankai gauges. In addition to an Episode mode featuring an original story by *Bleach* creator Tite Kubo, Shattered Blade boasts arcade, versus, and training modes, plus plentiful unlockables that will keep players slicing and dicing for weeks. —Chris H.

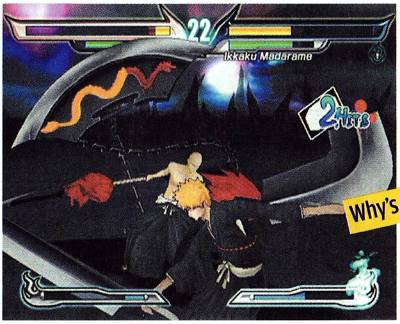
>BLEACH: THE BLADE OF FATE

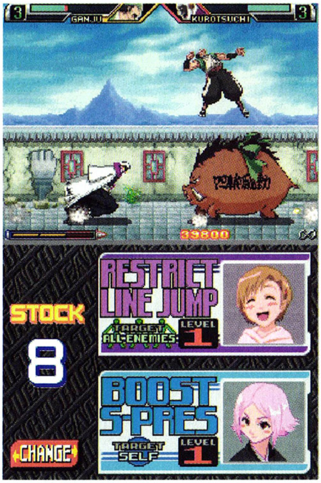
PLATFORM: DS • **PUBLISHER:** Sega
DEVELOPER: Treasure • **RELEASE:** October 2007

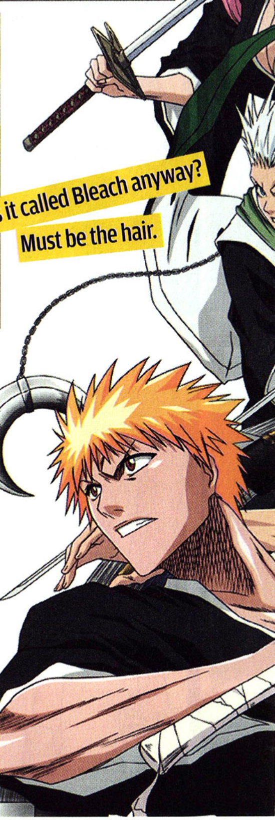
Treasure has a stellar track record for creating compelling 2-D action games, and their surprisingly deep Bleach fighter for the DS should keep their winning streak alive. Already a hit in Japan, The Blade of Fate combines familiar fighting-game conventions with some cool DS-specific features such as touch-screen button macros for complex combo moves. Like any good fighting game, Blade is pretty easy to pick up and play but offers a pile of cool special moves and characters to satisfy more-obsessive gamers. And if the special moves aren't enough to keep you busy, the collectible Spirit Cards—which you can use during fights to enhance your abilities—add yet another facet to the complex battle system. Bleach fans can take the long road through the talky Story mode, but fighting junkies will probably spend most of their time in Arcade and Versus modes, where the dialogue is sparse and the action is furious. With Wi-Fi and local-wireless play for up to four players, it'll take a while before this Blade becomes dull. —Drew W.



Hey, you copied my fashion sense! Let's battle!







Why's it called Bleach anyway? Must be the hair.

Power of Attorney

>PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

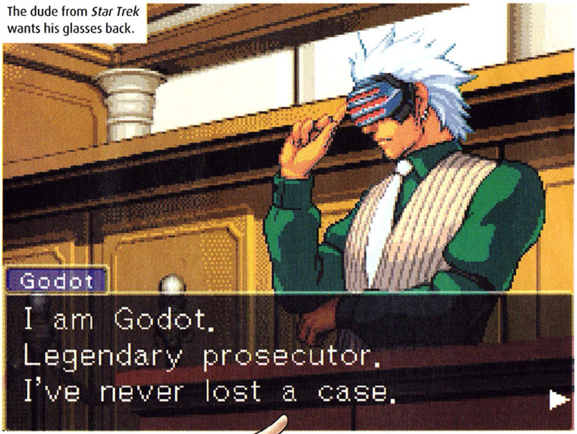
PLATFORM: DS • **PUBLISHER:** CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007

Phoenix Wright is in trouble. If you're a fan of the humorous, legal-minded graphic-text adventure series then that's not news to you—defense attorney Phoenix has been in over his head since day one. But this time it's different. Now Phoenix is the one accused of murder.

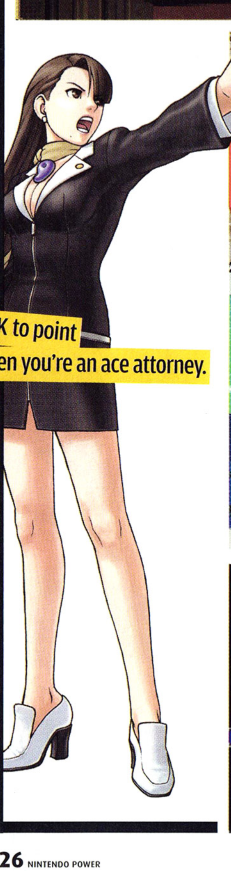
So begins Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations: with a flashback case where you take control not of Phoenix, but of his mentor, Mia Fey, back when she was a rookie attorney and Phoenix was still studying at the university. Ever wondered how Phoenix met Mia and began walking the path of an ace attorney? Now you'll get to find out. Other cases put you back in Phoenix's well-polished shoes, and one case is even split between the two time periods. No matter which attorney you're controlling, however, your goals are the same: defend the innocent, expose the guilty, and reveal the lies in witnesses' testimonies through cross-examinations and the use of evidence.

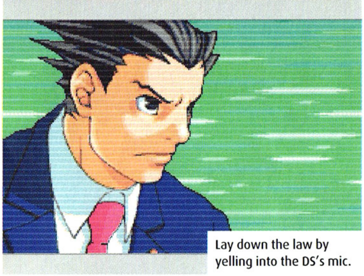
Though the game doesn't add any new play mechanics to the Ace Attorney formula, it takes advantage of the techniques that have made the series a sleeper success: investigating crime scenes (via the touch screen or Control Pad) for evidence, questioning witnesses for information, breaking through Psyche-Lock barriers to uncover falsities, and yelling "Objection!" or "Take that!" into the DS microphone at appropriate times. Five cases will challenge your truth-finding skills; over the course of them you'll encounter returning characters like Mia's psychic sister Maya, their cousin Pearl, blundering detective Dick Gumshoe, and Phoenix's old nemeses Miles Edgeworth and Franziska von Karma. You'll also meet new faces, like a deceptive yakuza gangster, and Phoenix's new main adversary: an enigmatic, hardnosed, mask-wearing prosecutor named Godot.

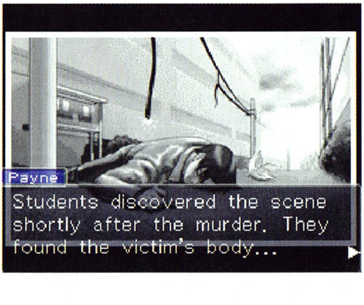
Before all is said and done, Trials and Tribulations promises to delve into the mysteries that have existed since the series' beginning (such as the curious disappearance of Mia and Maya's mother) and set up connections to the next Ace Attorney title (which the game's producer reports is already being translated for North America). Of course, it's all a moot point if you can't get Phoenix cleared of that murder rap. Better start studying up on your legalese—court will be back in session in just a few short months. —CHRIS H.


The dude from *Star Trek* wants his glasses back.

Godot
I am Godot.
Legendary prosecutor.
I've never lost a case.


It's OK to point when you're an ace attorney.


Lay down the law by yelling into the DS's mic.


Payne
Students discovered the scene shortly after the murder. They found the victim's body...

Dead Aim

>GHOST SQUAD

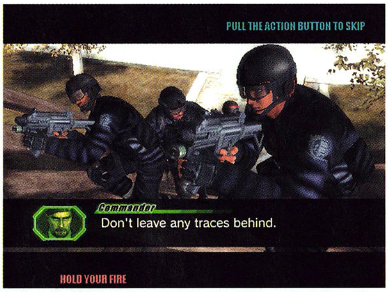
PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** Sega
DEVELOPER: AM2 • **RELEASE:** Fall 2007

One of the first titles to rock the Wii Zapper comes from Sega's extensive library of arcade shooter games—Ghost Squad is a faithful adaptation of the run-and-gun quarter-eater that hit arcades in 2004. With Zapper in hand, you and the rest of the G.H.O.S.T. special-forces unit must infiltrate terrorist hideouts and stop their criminal plans, including rescuing hostages, defusing bombs, and wiping out syndicate leaders.

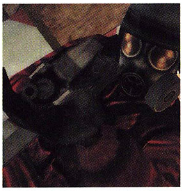
Accuracy and speed are paramount—you get extra points for taking down enemies quickly or for pulling off headshots. You'll find power-ups that will help you out temporarily, such as by boosting your weapon's power, increasing the size of your weapon clip, or refilling your health. During a mission, you'll be able to choose branching paths, giving you plenty of reasons to play through levels multiple times.

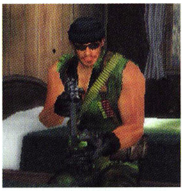
You can play Ghost Squad two ways—either with the Zapper or with the Wii remote alone. The Zapper provides a nice feel of stability and control—you use the Z Button to shoot and the B Button for action events, such as cutting wires to defuse a bomb or slapping handcuffs on a suspect. The Wii remote works just fine, as well—the B Button becomes your trigger and the A Button serves as the action button.

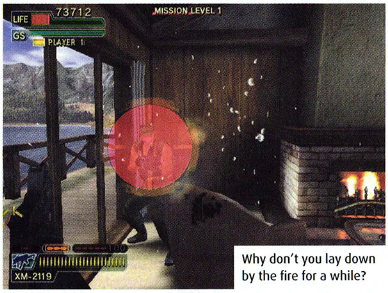
The blood-pumping action will join the Wii Zapper lineup this fall. —Chris S.



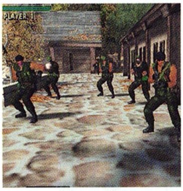
Don't leave any traces behind.

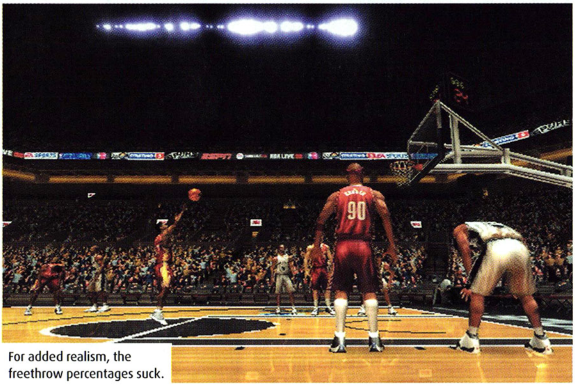






Why don't you lay down by the fire for a while?





For added realism, the freethrow percentages suck.

Wii Ballin'

>NBA LIVE 08

PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: EA Canada • **RELEASE:** October 2007

It was only a matter of time before someone looked into adapting Wii controls to round ball—and, unsurprisingly, EA is the first to put the ball in play, with their powerhouse NBA Live series. The game offers two different control modes that greatly simplify the control interface found in basketball titles on other systems. To shoot the ball or perform a slam dunk, you just pull the Wii remote back over your shoulder, then swing it forward like you're releasing the ball. You control your player's movement with the Control Stick, and you can use the nunchuk's motion sensitivity to execute juke moves to throw off defenders. If you want even *less* control over the game, EA has introduced a new feature called EA Sports Family Play: you can jump into an AI-controlled game any time you want to take shots, make passes, and strip the ball from opposing players. Like most EA sports games, Live boasts a slew of modes, gimmicks, and minigames—but one new feature deserves a few fist pumps: up to eight players (four on each side) can compete online using a Wi-Fi connection. —Drew W.

War Machines

>FRONT MISSION

PLATFORM: DS • **PUBLISHER:** SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX • **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 23, 2007

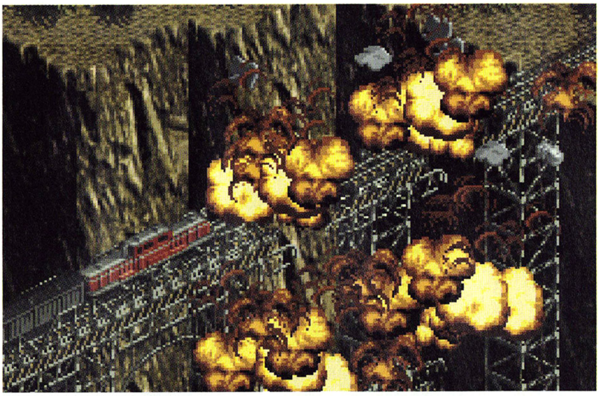
Though it hasn't achieved the lofty status attained by many of Square Enix's other long-running franchises, Front Mission has garnered an enthusiastic following over the years. To this point, however, only two of the five games in the series have made it stateside—Front Mission 3 for PlayStation and Front Mission 4 for PS2. The first installment, released for the Super Famicom in 1995, has never been published outside of Japan. That changes this October, when Square Enix finally brings the original Front Mission to North America in the form of a DS remake.

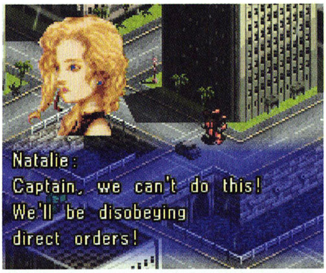
A turn-based strategy RPG, the game puts players in command of giant mechs called Wanzers (from the German *Wanderung Panzer* or walking tanks). Battles take place on a grid-based combat zone, but just as important as formulating an effective battlefield strategy is putting together the right 'bots for the job. Each mech consists of a body, a left arm, a right arm, and a pair of legs. Once you've chosen your parts, you can equip a weapon in each hand, mount a weapon or shield on each shoulder, and install a CPU that enhances your Wanzer's capabilities. You can also outfit your creation with a backpack that allows it to carry items, as long as the various armaments don't exceed the mech's weight limit (and granted you've got sufficient funds to purchase everything). The key is in figuring out what role you want a particular unit to play, and how best to customize it to serve that purpose. You also have to consider the Wanzer's pilot, who has his own unique strengths and weaknesses.

The other defining trait of Front Mission's strategic gameplay is that each part of a Wanzer's frame—the body, left arm, right arm, and legs—has its own hit points. Destroying an arm prevents the mech from using any weapons equipped to that appendage, taking out its legs renders it immobile, and blowing up the body eliminates it from the fight entirely. Some weapons fire only one shot per attack, focusing all of the damage on a single part; others unload multiple rounds, spreading the damage over multiple parts. Judging by the current status of your opponent, you have to decide what type of attack will be most effective.

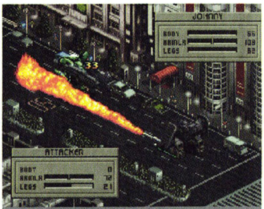
Furthermore, weapons are divided into three categories: long-range, short-range, and melee. Long-range weapons must of course be fired from a distance, but unlike with short-range and melee attacks, the target doesn't have an opportunity to retaliate. Despite its age, Front Mission certainly isn't lacking tactical depth.

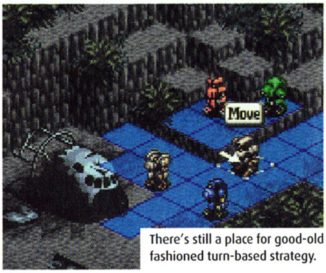
Naturally, the move to DS brings with it some improvements. Stylus controls aren't exactly groundbreaking at this point, but they are quite the boon for a game like this. You spend a lot of time tentatively selecting a move or attack, contemplating the potential results, then testing



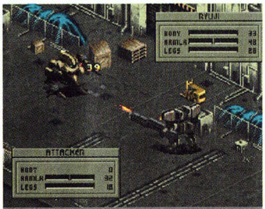


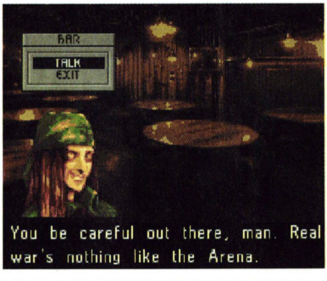
Natalie:
Captain, we can't do this!
We'll be disobeying
direct orders!



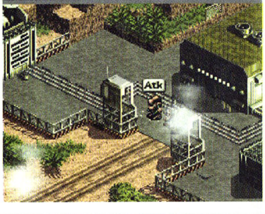


There's still a place for good-old fashioned turn-based strategy.





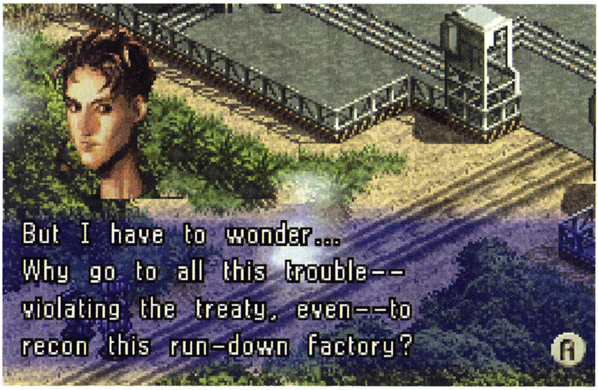
You be careful out there, man. Real war's nothing like the Arena.



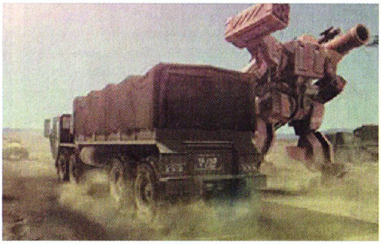
alternatives before finally committing to a particular command. The ability to navigate menus with a tap of the stylus is thus a welcome luxury. The other big advantage of the hardware is that simply highlighting a unit on the bottom screen brings up all of the pertinent stats on the top screen, eliminating the need to continually switch back and forth between the battle map and a status screen. Unfortunately, the graphics look exactly as they did on the Super Famicom, and aside from the great Amano character illustrations, seem a bit bland by today's standards.

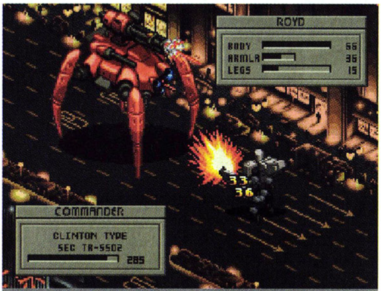
The game's story revolves around a conflict over Huffman Island, which is located in the neutral zone between two rival superpowers. As has become a series trademark, however, the real focus is on the individual characters and how they respond to the events around them. To that end, you can play through the campaign with a hero from either side, giving you different perspectives on what transpires. (The DS version of the game also adds five new missions to each side.)

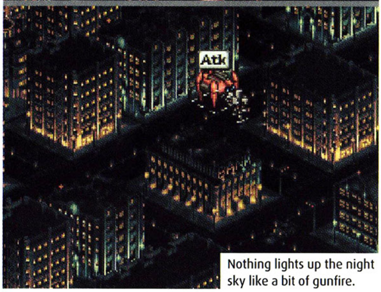
If you're looking for turn-based strategy on the go, it doesn't get much better than this (especially if you're like me and have a soft spot for giant robots). The original Front Mission spawned four sequels for a reason, and the game holds up pretty darn well on the DS. Hopefully this is just the beginning; I'd love to see subsequent episodes, or better yet an all-new installment, follow on the handheld. —Steve T.



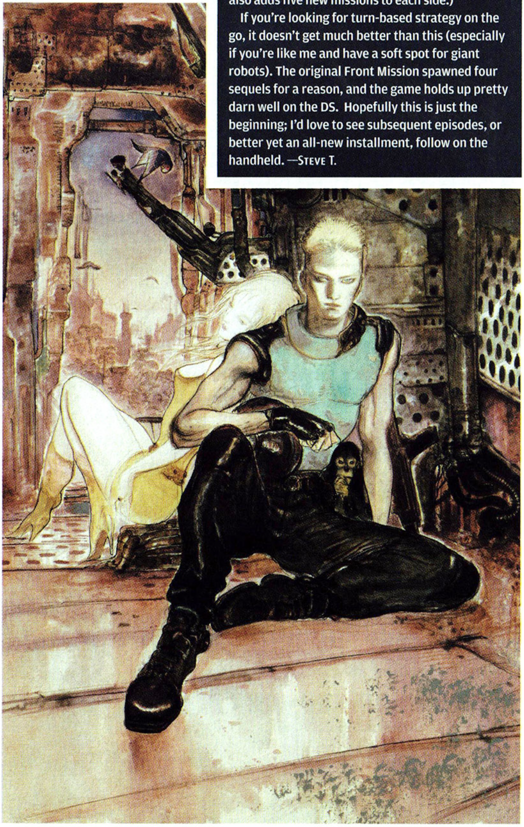
But I have to wonder...
Why go to all this trouble--
violating the treaty, even--to
recon this run-down factory?







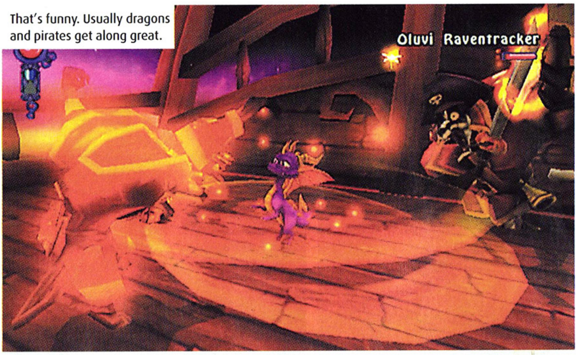
Nothing lights up the night sky like a bit of gunfire.

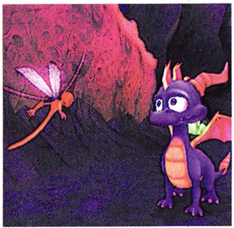


Night Lighter

>THE LEGEND SPYRO: THE ETERNAL NIGHT

PLATFORM: Wii (ALSO ON DS, GBA) • **PUBLISHER:** Sierra
DEVELOPER: Krome • **RELEASE:** October 2007


That's funny. Usually dragons and pirates get along great.



Spyro is back with The Eternal Night, the second part of the trilogy that kicked off on the GameCube with A New Beginning. With a greater emphasis on exploration and puzzle-solving, The Eternal Night aims to return the long-running franchise to a more even mix of platforming and combat than in A New Beginning.

The trilogy's first installment suffered from a rather repetitive combat system; in the sequel, the developers look to overcome that shortcoming by giving Spyro a slew of new attacks, as well as the ability to string together intricate combos (executed via context-sensitive slashes with the Wii remote). Included in these new moves are four new and upgradeable breath attacks and aerial combat maneuvers to send enemies flying. In addition, Spyro learns a new skill that allows him to slow down time, giving him the opportunity to thrash on tough enemies or solve puzzles within the worlds.

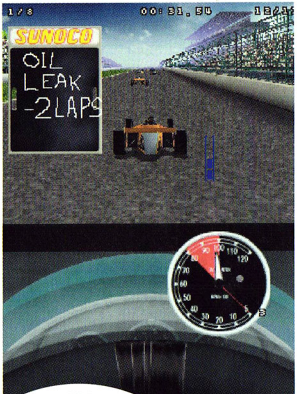
The developers are striving for a cinematic feel in The Eternal Night, with plenty of story scenes to keep the plot in focus. In addition, top-tier voice talents such as Elijah Wood, Gary Oldman, and Futurama's Billy West offer up their narrative skills. —Chris S.

Turn Back Time

>INDIANAPOLIS 500 LEGENDS

PLATFORM: DS (ALSO ON Wii) • **PUBLISHER:** Majesco
DEVELOPER: Torus Games • **RELEASE:** October 2007

When A.J. Foyt and Mario Andretti were at the top of their game and speed was more important than corporate sponsorships, the Indianapolis 500 was the pinnacle of motorsports. Indianapolis 500 Legends relives the good old days with a mission-based structure that puts you into the event's greatest moments between 1961 and 1971: everything from memorable crashes (complete with flying debris that you have to avoid) to the introduction of Parnelli Jones's turbine-powered racer in 1967. As you take on more than 30 of the decade's most successful drivers, you unlock their cars for future turns. In addition to reliving or rewriting historic highlights, you can take on full races, starting with qualifying rounds. You can also compete in multiplayer modes built for up to four participants. Pit-lane minigames make use of the DS touch screen with stylus-triggered tire changes and fill-ups. The faster you are at dragging and dropping rubber, the quicker you will be to rejoin the race and rocket to the finish line. —George S.



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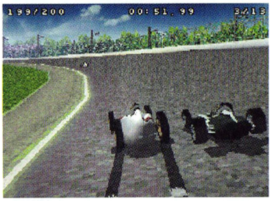

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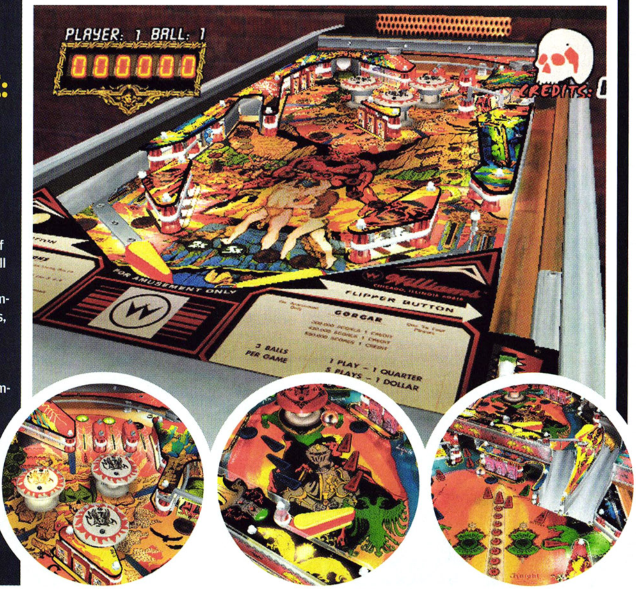
The game (right) does a darn good job of looking like the real thing (left).

Take the Plunge

>PINBALL HALL OF FAME: THE WILLIAMS COLLECTION

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: Crave
DEVELOPER: FarSight Studios • RELEASE: October 2007

The days of packed arcades filled with the sounds of rising scores and metal balls bouncing off bumpers are long gone, but the glory days of pinball live on in Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection. This compilation re-creates 10 classic pinball tables (some of them unlockable) from the '70s, '80s, and '90s, including the demonic Gorgar (the first talking pinball game), the medieval-themed Black Knight, the stormy Whirlwind, and the sci-fi-themed Pinbot (which longtime gamers may remember from its NES adaptation back in 1990). Every table is authentically rebuilt in 3-D, allowing for numerous camera angles and true-to-life ball physics. The controls are kept simple—pull back on the nunchuk's Control Stick to launch the ball, then keep the ball in play by controlling the flippers with the Z and B Buttons. You can also nudge the table by shaking the remote—a small but effective addition that adds to the game's immersion factor. —Chris H.

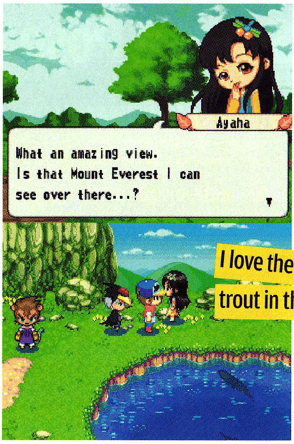


Seize the Carp

>RIVER KING: MYSTIC VALLEY

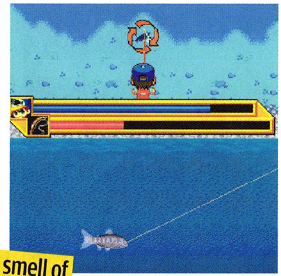
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: Natsume
DEVELOPER: Marvelous Interactive
RELEASE: September 2007

Using the words fishing, magical, and adventure to describe any video game might seem like a stretch, but Natsume manages to cast its usual charm over unusual subjects and emerge with another captivating RPG experience. River King: Mystic Valley works its magic on the DS, combining a satisfyingly realistic touch-screen fishing interface with fetch quests, minigames, collection-completion tasks, mysteries, pet care, and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection tournaments. I suspect it will calculate your taxes, as well. At the heart of the adventure is a quest to find the magical River King—a fish who can rouse your sister from an unending snooze. As you search for this finny phenom, you'll drop your line in lakes, rivers, ponds, and swamps, interact with a huge cast of characters, collect a vast assortment of fishing gear, and even assist a scientific study by supplying biological specimens to a researcher. Like the Legend of the River King games that preceded it, Mystic Valley is far from your average fishing game; but even with all there is to do, prepare to be patient. It seems that the bigger the fish is that noses your bait, the more likely it is to tease you and swim away. —Scott P.


Ayaha

What an amazing view.
Is that Mount Everest I can see over there...?

I love the smell of trout in the morning.



Crash into Wii

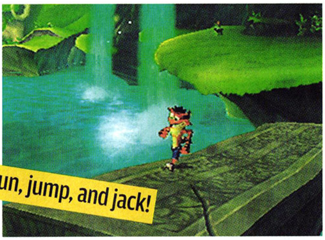
>CRASH OF THE TITANS

PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** Sierra
DEVELOPER: Radical • **RELEASE:** October 2007

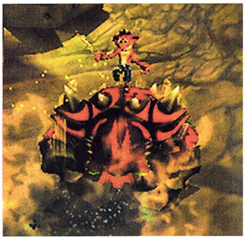
Over the past few years, Crash Bandicoot has been relegated to second-tier mascot status with one lackluster title after another. Now Sierra hopes to put Crash back in the video game limelight with his newest frenetic adventure, Crash of the Titans.

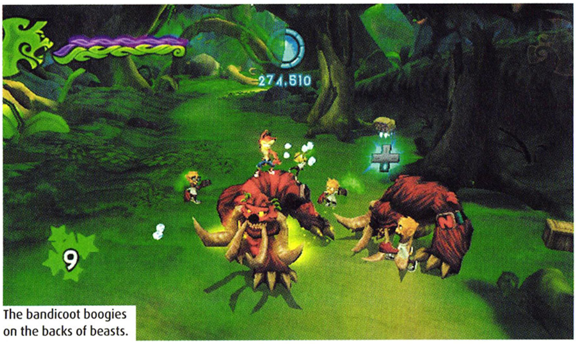
Accompanied by his niece Nina, Crash's arch nemesis Doctor Neo Cortex returns with a new nefarious plan to destroy Crash's island. This time, Neo and Nina attempt to mutate the animals of the island into horrendous monsters, then unleash them to tear apart the island from the inside out. But Crash soon learns that he can take control of these monsters by a process called *jacking*, and use the creatures against each other in combat. To jack into a monster, Crash must first wear down his potential target through a combination of melee attacks; when the mutant has taken enough damage, Crash can hop on its back and direct it to fight other enemies. He can then jack into other monsters on the fly. Each monster has its own special moves and strengths—some can breath fire, while others can shoot projectiles, for example.

Crash of the Titans isn't all about combat, however—true to Crash's roots, there will be plenty of platforming goodness mixed into each level. Fans of classic Crash games will also appreciate plenty of fan service woven into each world. Look for Crash of the Titans to jack into Wii this fall. —Chris S.



Run, jump, and jack!





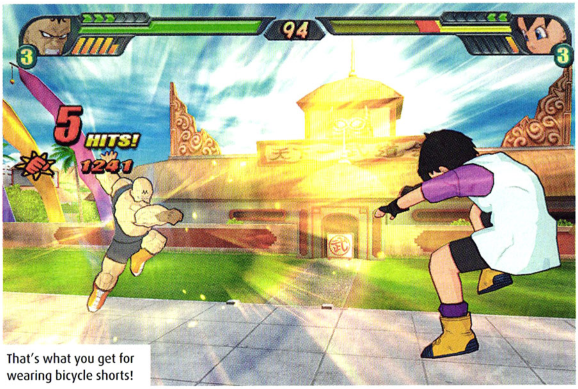
The bandicoot boogies on the backs of beasts.

Strike A Pose

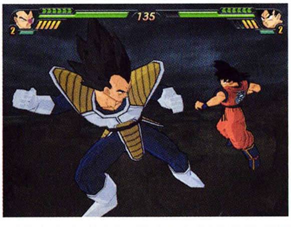
>DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 3

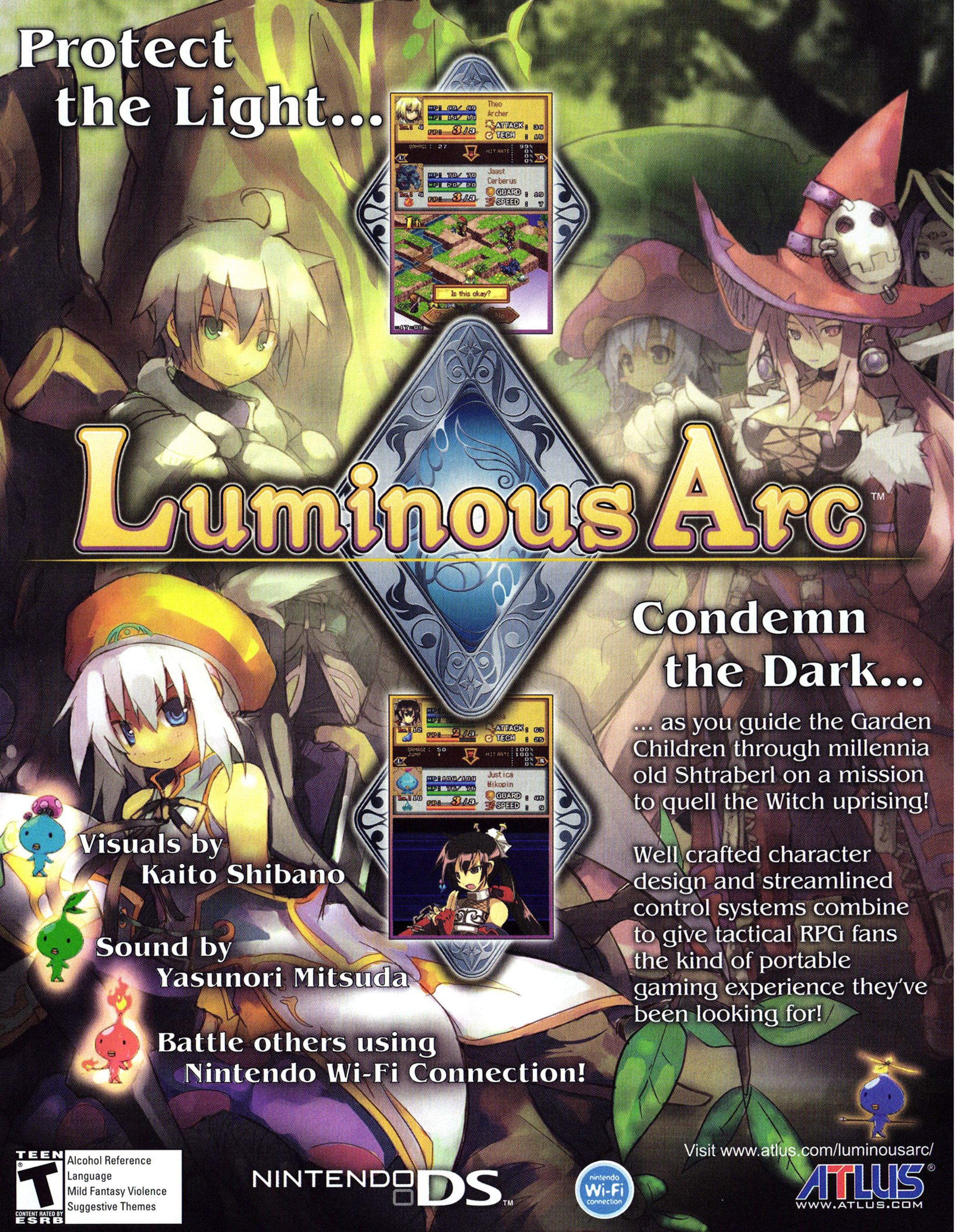
PLATFORM: Wii • **PUBLISHER:** Atari
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai/Spike • **RELEASE:** Fall 2007

Never subtle, Dragon Ball Z explodes onto the Wii for its second go at motion-based fighting with more than 150 playable heroes and villains having it out on 30 battle stages. A Wii-exclusive online feature allows players to take on each other over the Internet for the first time, so even if you're the only Goku maniac in your group of friends, you'll be able to go fan-to-fan against someone as passionate about DBZ as you are. The single-player game will also get an upgrade with 10 types of AI balancing that will allow you to customize the power and behavior of your opponents. In battle, new techniques will let you make the most out of every move, which will prove to be useful when you drop into Dragon History mode and engage in re-creations of popular grudge matches from the show. If you like what you see, you can see it again in Battle Replay mode. The DBZ battlers have become among the most popular fighting games since their introduction five years ago, and they have hit their stride with the real-move-making capabilities of the Wii console. —George S.



That's what you get for wearing bicycle shorts!




Theo
Archer
HP: 49/ 49
MP: 14/ 14
FP: 3/3
ATTACK : 34
TECH : 15
DAMAGE : 27
HIT RATE : 99%
0%
0%
0%
L
R
Jaast
Cerberus
HP: 70/ 70
MP: 20/ 20
FP: 3/3
GUARD : 19
SPEED : 7
1h
Is this okay?
17 09
ATTACK : 63
TECH : 25
DAMAGE : 50
JUMP
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Justica
Mikopin
HP: 104/104
MP: 75/ 75
FP: 3/3
GUARD : 46
SPEED : 9
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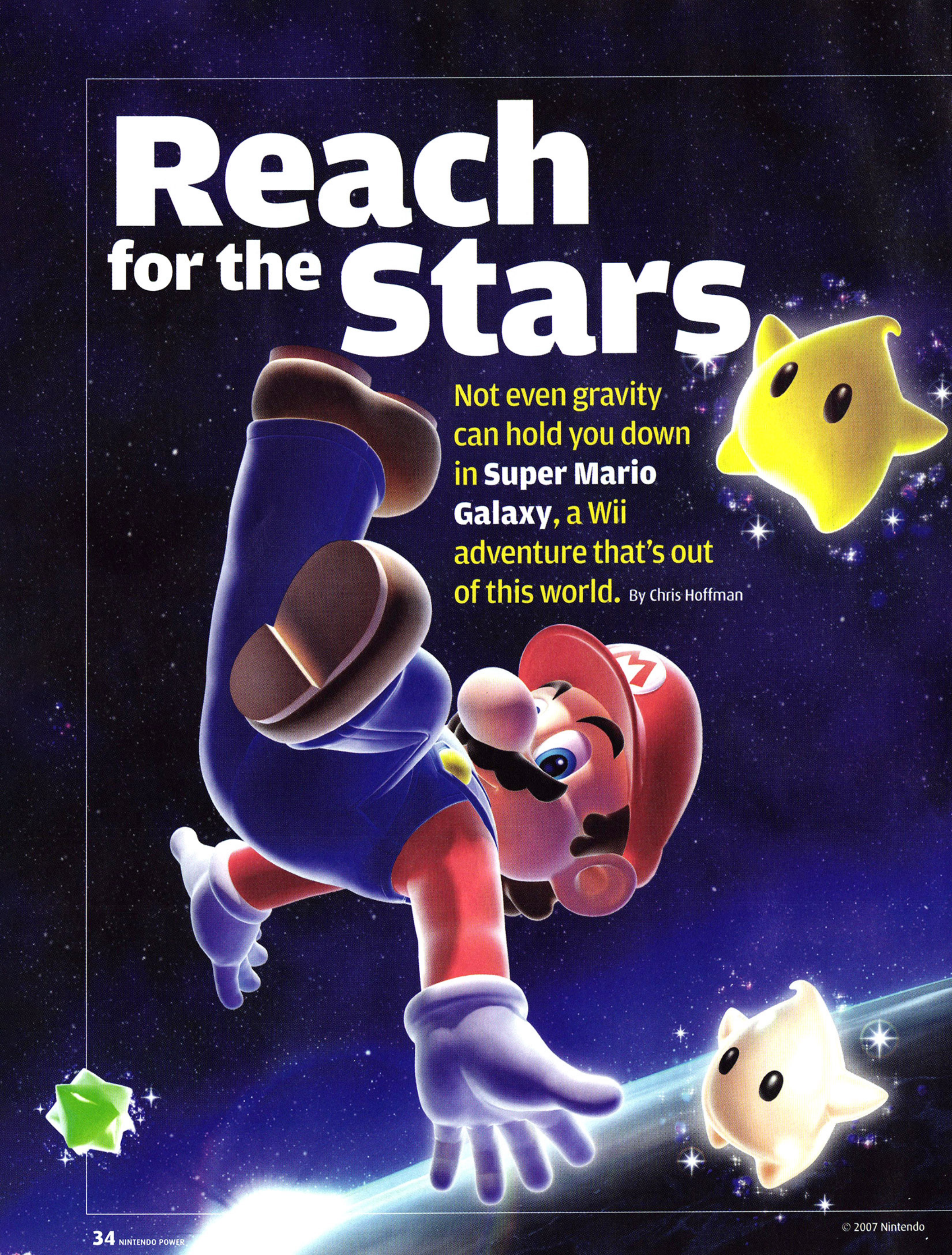
Reach for the Stars

Not even gravity can hold you down in **Super Mario Galaxy**, a Wii adventure that's out of this world.

By Chris Hoffman



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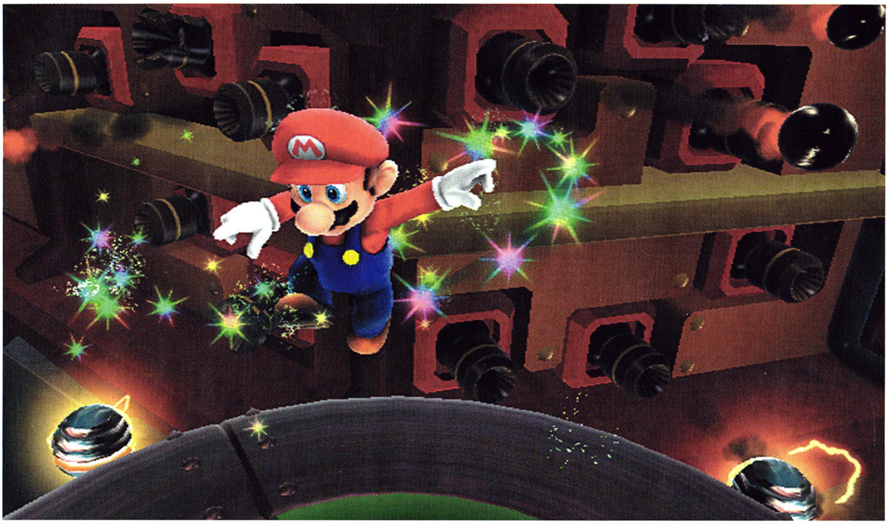
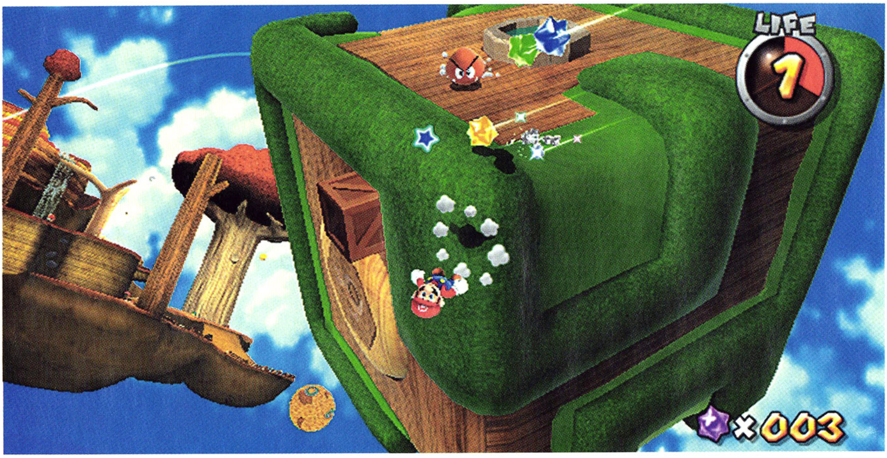


Look at the night sky; distant stars, uncharted planets, and who knows what else lie in the heavens. The depths of space are a place of mystery and limitless potential, and this November they become yours to explore in all their glory in Super Mario Galaxy. Combining the traditional platforming action that Mario is known for with the wonder and excitement that have become synonymous with Wii, Super Mario Galaxy is the game that Nintendo fans new and old have been waiting for.

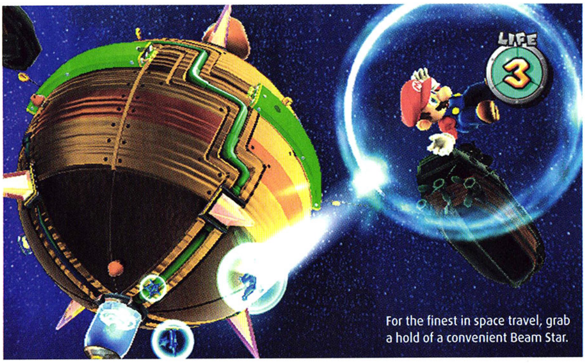
It's the Mario you've always loved, going places of which you've never dreamed.

Welcome to the Galaxy

At a basic level, Super Mario Galaxy is much like the 3-D Mario games that players have come to know and love: Super Mario 64 and Super Mario Sunshine. "This is a game that we consider to be kind of the traditional style of video game that we've been making for a long time—the type that probably all of you have been looking forward to," said Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto at a discussion during this year's E3. "We think it's going to be the type of game that will satisfy those of you who are looking for a more hard-core experience." While the game will be easily accessible by Mario newcomers as well, veterans will feel right at home with the repertoire of familiar moves. By moving with the nunchuk's Control Stick, jumping with the remote's A Button, and ducking with the nunchuk's Z Button, you can make Mario run, jump, triple-jump, backflip, somersault, long-jump, wall-kick, and butt-smash his way to success.



"There's going to be a lot of different levels of gravity in the game . . ."
—Shigeru Miyamoto



For the finest in space travel, grab a hold of a convenient Beam Star.

What sets Galaxy apart from previous Mario adventures, however, is its intergalactic setting and the mind-blowing use of gravity that goes with it. As Mario embarks on his journey, he finds himself traversing spherical planetoids and other rounded objects of all shapes and sizes—from as big as a virtual city block (or bigger) to not much larger than Mario himself, and everything in between.

"There's going to be a lot of different levels of gravity in the game, and we've also designed the game using a number of spherical objects that Mario runs around," stated Miyamoto, "and there will also be areas where he'll cling to spherical objects and kind of crawl around them. These are ideas that we've had since very early on after we finished Super Mario 64. . . . Finally we've been able to bring those together into a final creative product, so we're all very excited about that."

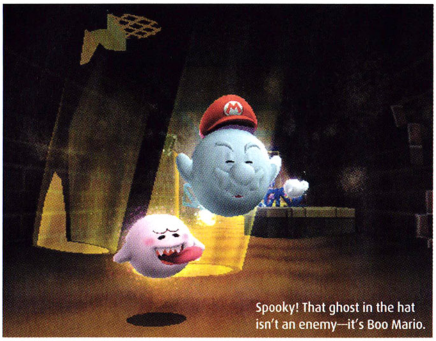
Each orb has its own gravity, so you'll be able to explore the heavenly bodies from every angle and perform feats never before seen in a Mario game. Jump off the edge of a planetoid and you're likely to be yanked to the orb's far side by its gravitational pull; if you're amongst a cluster of spheres, you can jump between them freely as the gravity works its magic; or you may find yourself on a glistening floating platform whose underside you can run to in search of unseen riches.

"With the gravity system and the spherical-world system of the planets in Mario Galaxy, you kind of get that feeling again that you had in Mario 64, where it is simply fun to just run around and navigate the space," commented Miyamoto. "One thing that I think has always been a feature of the Mario games is that players have always tried to find their own little special techniques . . . to help them get to the next level or find little secret paths and things like that. And with the gravity system, I think there's going to be a lot of areas people can find and funny little things that maybe they didn't expect they'd be able to do, just because of the way gravity works . . . so it's going to be a very fun experience."

To top it off, the developers have streamlined the controls by replacing the user-manipulated camera (as introduced in Super Mario 64) with an automatic one. The new camera (which you can center behind Mario on some levels by pressing the C Button) makes the game instantly more accessible, plus it eliminates any potential confusion of circumnavigating orbs—from what we've seen so far, it works like a dream.

Seeing Stars

By this point you may be asking, "So why's Mario in space anyway? Is he an astronaut now or something?" The answer is simple: Bowser. Every hundred years a



Spooky! That ghost in the hat isn't an enemy—it's Boo Mario.

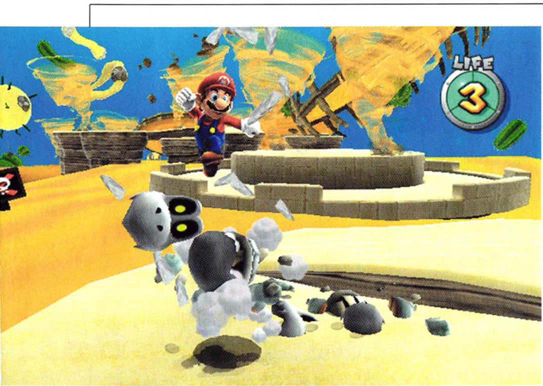
> **"...you kind of get that feeling again that you had in Mario 64, where it is simply fun to just run around and navigate the space."**
>
> —Shigeru Miyamoto

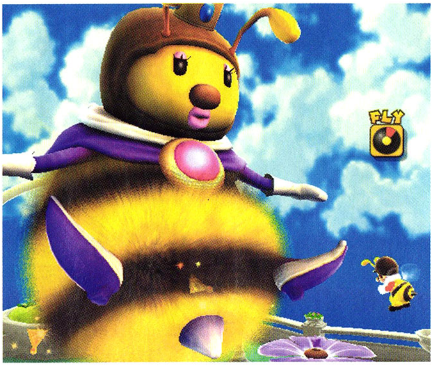
comet passes over the Mushroom Kingdom and rains down magical stars and stardust, and as Princess Peach and the citizens of the kingdom are celebrating the centennial event, Bowser and his legions attack. We don't want to spoil the story entirely, but needless to say, Mario's longtime nemesis is up to his old tricks. Peach gets kidnapped yet again—at least she should be used to it by now. Mario attempts to put a stop to Bowser's shenanigans, but things go awry; the next thing he knows, he finds himself on a mysterious moon high above the Mushroom Kingdom.

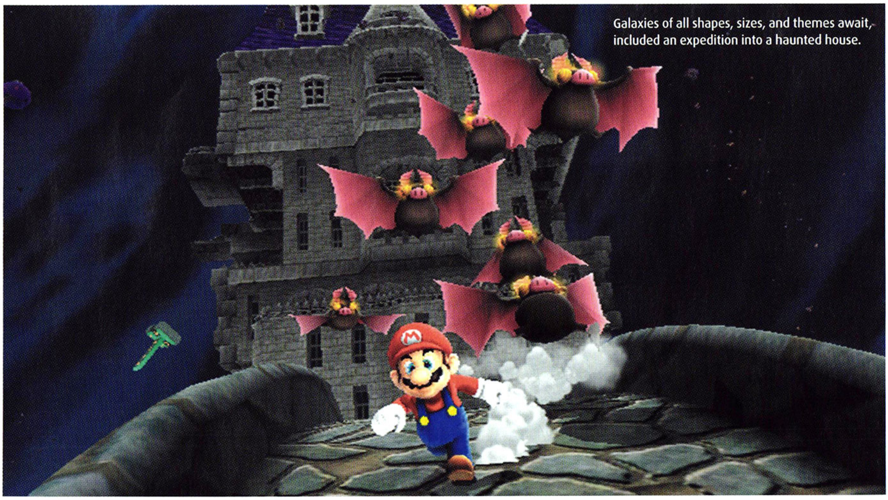
But the moon is no barren lunar landscape; it's there that a friendly encounter results in Mario obtaining new, special powers that will play an integral role in his mission to rescue Princess Peach. First and foremost, Mario gains a new spin ability, which is activated by shaking the Wii remote or nunchuk. Next to jumping, spinning might be the most important move in the game. Mario can stun enemies by spinning into them, then run into them to defeat them permanently; he can also spin to deflect projectiles back at foes, spin against rubbery plants to use them as offensive weapons, or use the spin to shatter breakable objects, activate switches, turn screws, climb vines, or interact with the world in a myriad of other ways. Spinning midjump gives Mario a slight aerial boost, which can be a lifesaver in some of the game's more advanced levels.

Mario also gets the power to use special kinds of stars to help him proceed through the game's stages. Mario uses Star Rings, for instance, to launch from planetoid to planetoid within a given level—get close to the Star Ring, then shake the remote or nunchuk to make Mario blast off to his next destination. In some cases the Star Rings are fragmented into pieces called star chips, and you must collect five chips before you can activate the ring. Beam Stars offer aid to Mario in a different way. These blue stars float in space, and by pointing at the Beam Star with the remote and pressing A, you can pull Mario toward the star with a tractor beam; in addition to being an intuitive, fun gameplay mechanic, it's a great way to traverse the vastness of space.

Another novel gameplay addition is the inclusion of stardust. You'll find the colorful star shards as you explore each stage—sometimes they're lying about the landscape, other times they're falling from the sky, occasionally they're within smashable blocks, and often they're surrendered by defeated enemies. Though coins are still to be found, stardust is the collectible of choice in Galaxy—if you acquire enough shards you'll earn extra lives, and snagging the fragments is as easy as touching them or pointing at them with the Wii remote's cursor. Best of all, by pressing the







Galaxies of all shapes, sizes, and themes await, included an expedition into a haunted house.

B Button on the remote, you can use stardust as an offensive weapon that rains down and stuns enemies.

Wonderful Worlds

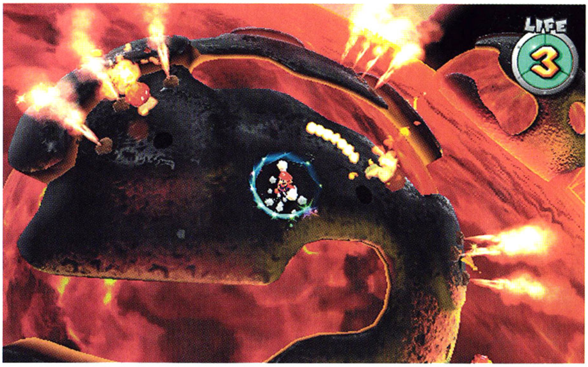
All of Mario's new skills will be put to the test as he traverses one of his largest adventures to date. According to Miyamoto, the game will contain a total of 120 stars to retrieve, spread out over 40 galaxies and six major regions.

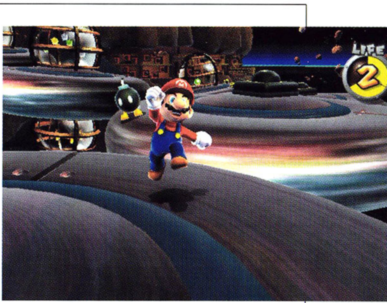
Every galaxy offers a different theme and feel. The first galaxy you encounter, the Gateway Galaxy, provides a marvelous planet-hopping romp through space in which you'll chase space rabbits (actually stars in disguise), collect star chips on a sticky planetoid protected by massive rolling boulders, fight a gargantuan Goomba to get a key, and use a warp pipe to enter a planetoid where you'll have to hit a series of switches to rescue an imprisoned Grand Star. In the Star Dust Galaxy, you'll use Beam Stars to maneuver amid space debris, journey across an old rocket, rescue Toads trapped within crystals, and explore an area where galactic junk forms into walkways before your eyes.

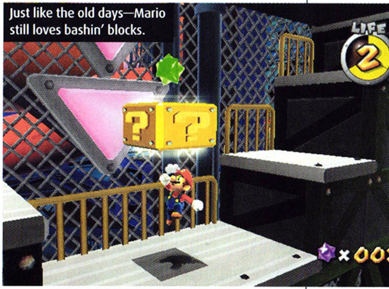
Similar to the levels in previous 3-D Mario games, galaxies offer multiple missions, each of which provides changes to the area that allow for new challenges and different paths through the stage. In the Egg Planet Galaxy, for example, you'll set out from a planetoid that features a house atop a grassy knoll on one side and a stone structure on the other. One mission leads to a treacherous hollowed-out melon-like planet (don't fall, or you'll be sucked into a black hole!) and eventually takes you to a planetoid where you must battle a giant Piranha Plant-type creature; another mission leads you to a living star that you must satisfy by feeding it stardust, after which it'll let you proceed to a huge transparent capsule that contains the 3-D equivalent of a traditional side-scrolling action level.

Some stages aren't set in deep space, but take place within the atmosphere of a few large planetoids. In the Honeybee Galaxy, Mario dons a never-before-seen bee suit that enables him to hover and climb special surfaces (like honeycombs and the burly body of the queen bee), while in the Beach Bowl Galaxy Mario can dive beneath the waves of a large water-filled orb, then explore a Thwomp-packed gauntlet that hangs high in the sky. Hardcore players should look forward especially to the Cookie Factory Galaxy—it features plentiful moving platforms and bottomless pits, so challenge abounds.

Other galaxies promise to be so vast that they'll feel more like the traditional worlds from Mario's






Just like the old days—Mario still loves bashin' blocks.

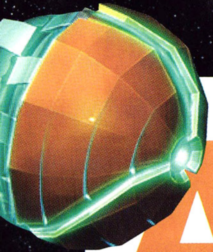
earlier games. "Because it's all sphere-based," Miyamoto commented, "you can make the spheres bigger and bigger, and if you make a sphere that's incredibly massive, it essentially feels like you're running around on a flat surface. So I think you can expect to see some big areas in this game." So far we've seen a haunted-house galaxy (in which Mario can power up into Boo Mario to gain limited flight and the ability to pass through fences), an ice galaxy that lets you explore a planet's frigid surface as well as its molten core, a galaxy set in a desert, and a galaxy where you climb a giant toy robot.

Help from Above

As Mario fans know, the last ingredient in the plumber's successful formula (aside from his mustache) is those wonderful power-ups. Alongside the aforementioned Bee Mario and Boo Mario suits, the hero will be able to assume other new forms, and he'll get to use some of his favorite classic power-ups as well. The good old Super Mushroom is back, and in Galaxy it temporarily increases your maximum health. The invincibility star returns, too—grab a hold of it to let Mario plow through any enemy in his path and achieve incredible speeds. Then there's the Fire Flower, which—in addition to satisfyingly obliterating enemies—can be used to solve simple puzzles.

But power-ups aren't the only things that can give Mario an advantage—Super Mario Galaxy also features a two-player cooperative assist mode. If you have a second Wii remote (no nunchuk necessary), a second player can join in with his own onscreen cursor and lend a hand by grabbing stardust, firing stardust at foes, or helping Mario in other ways. According to Miyamoto, the co-op mode offers a great way for fledgling Mario players to ease themselves into Mario's world. "I don't know if that would be used for maybe parents helping their children to play the game or maybe children helping their parents!" he remarked.

As you'd expect from a platformer bearing the Mario name, so far the game is shaping up amazingly. The game looks great (mind-blowing lighting and texture work makes this one of the most graphically impressive games on Wii) and plays great even in its unfinished form, and it boasts an ideal mix of innovative new ideas and the Mario gameplay fans adore. If you've been wishing upon a star for a fantastic successor to Mario's 3-D adventures, Super Mario Galaxy seems set to make your dreams come true.



ART ATTACK

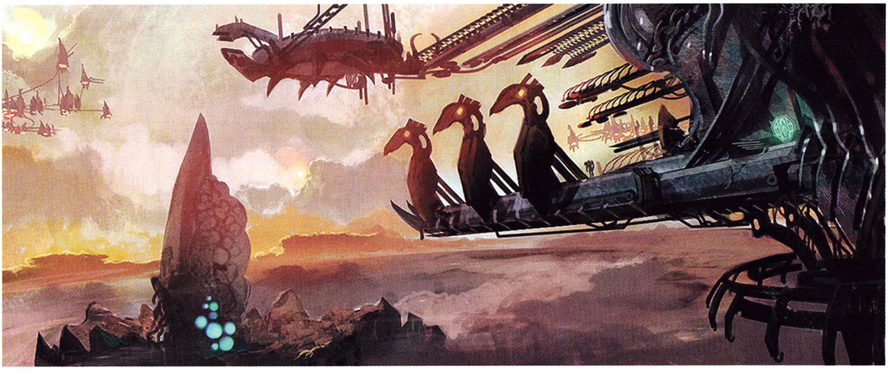
Feast your eyes on the artistry of **Metroid Prime 3: Corruption,** Retro's most stunning achievement to date. Samus has never looked so good.

By Christopher Shepperd

LEFT: Bounty Hunter Samus Aran

Playing the original Metroid games on NES and SNES, one can see loads of creativity within the constrained parameters of the older consoles. When the Prime series thrust Metroid onto GameCube, many graphical and artistic aspects had to be conceptualized to conform to current gamers' expectations. Fortunately, the reigns to the Metroid franchise were put into the extraordinarily capable hands of the developers at Retro Studios: they have taken a world envisioned over 20 years ago for an 8-bit, 2-D title, and have developed an aesthetic that both captures the Metroid spirit and appears entirely original.

As the Metroid Prime trilogy comes to a stunning finale on Wii, Retro has the opportunity to finesse even more style into their creation. The prolific artists at Retro have been busy handcrafting new hostile worlds and menacing creatures for Metroid Prime 3: Corruption. We have the chance to present some conceptual works of these environments, as well as some of the creatures that you'll encounter during Samus's adventure. As you'll see, Retro has saved the best for last.



BELOW: Skytown military research base, Elysia

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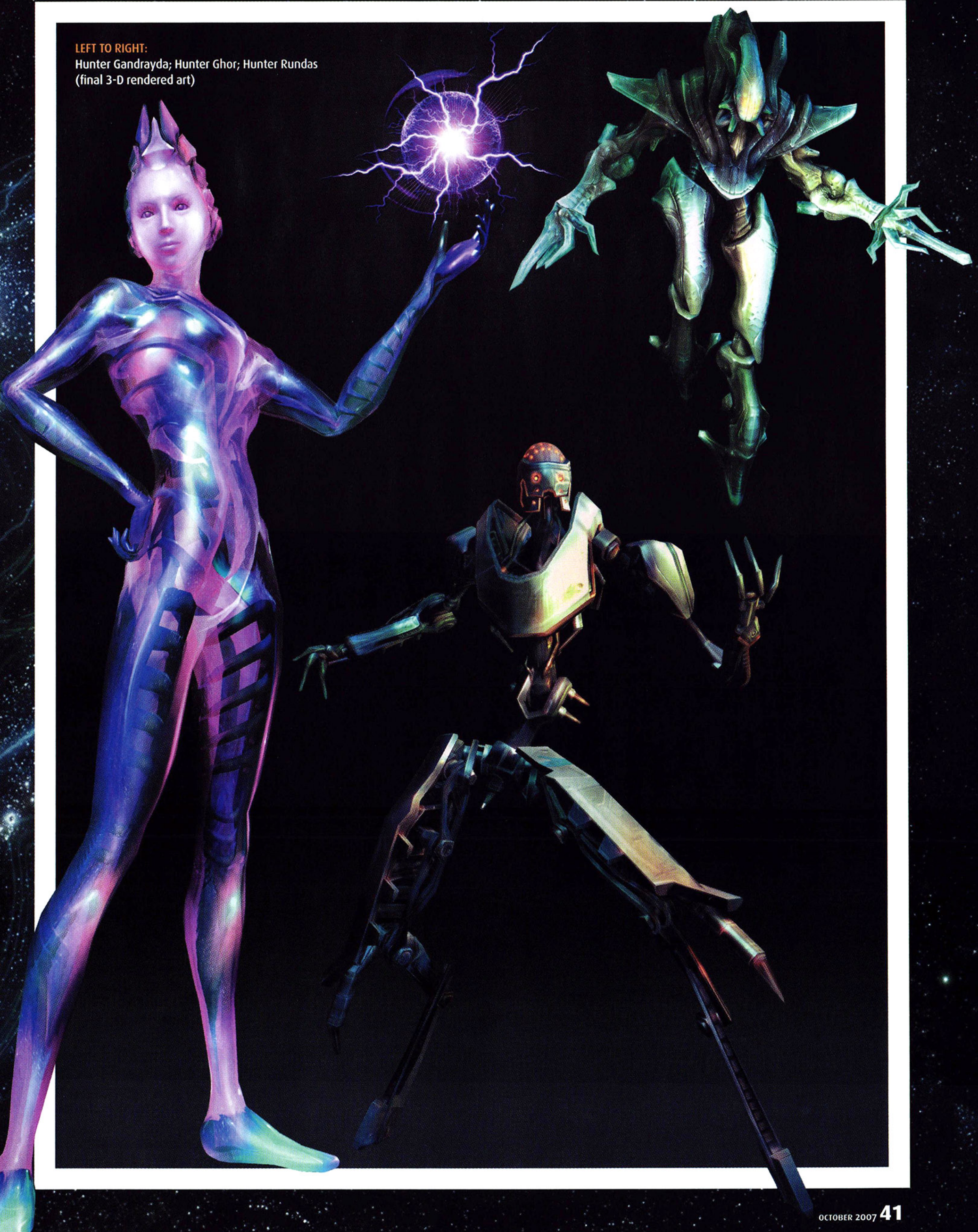
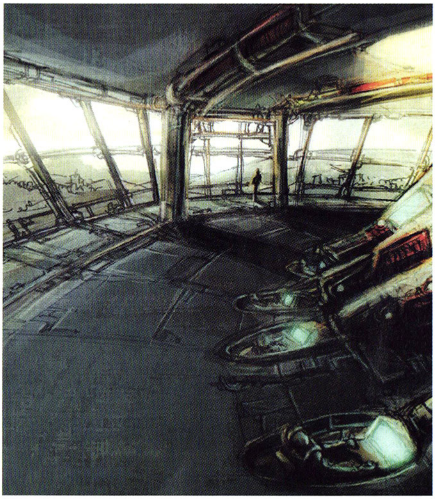
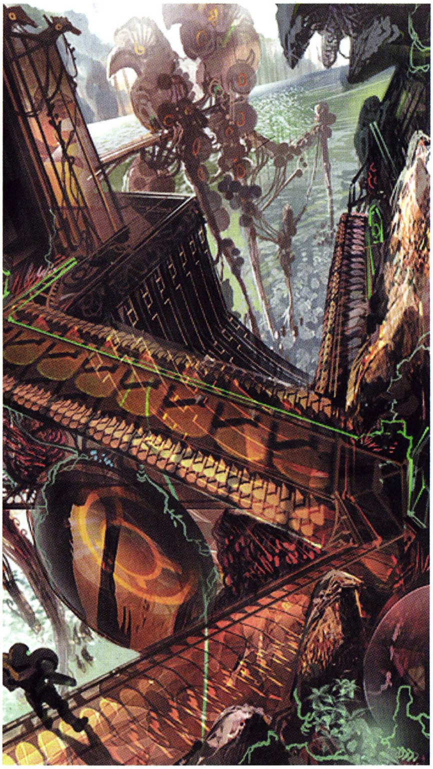


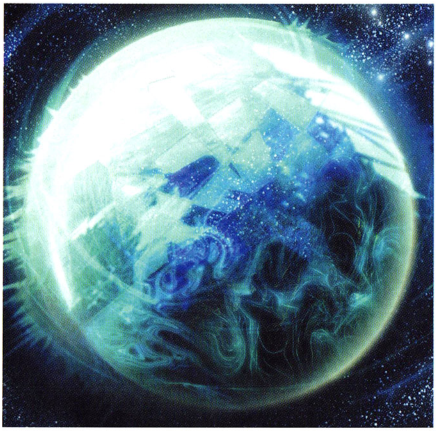
LEFT TO RIGHT:
Hunter Gandrayda; Hunter Ghor; Hunter Rundas (final 3-D rendered art)

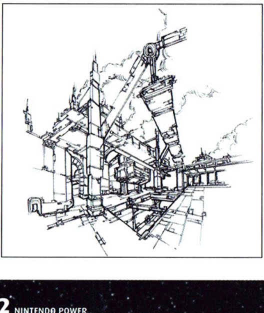
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

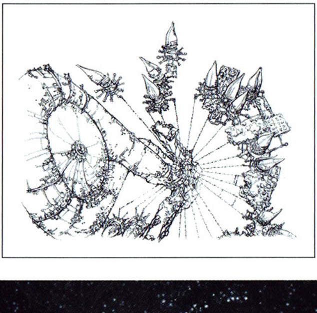
Federation Base bridge; Chozo ruins on planet Bryyo (actual location not used in final game); hand-drawn sketches; planet Phaaze

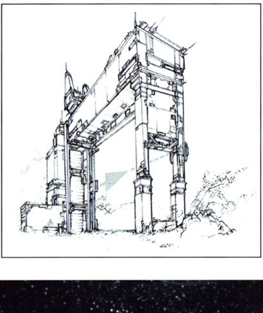






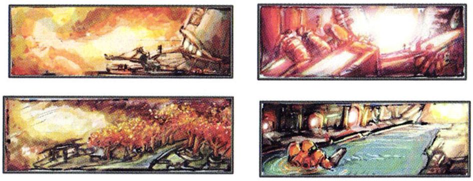


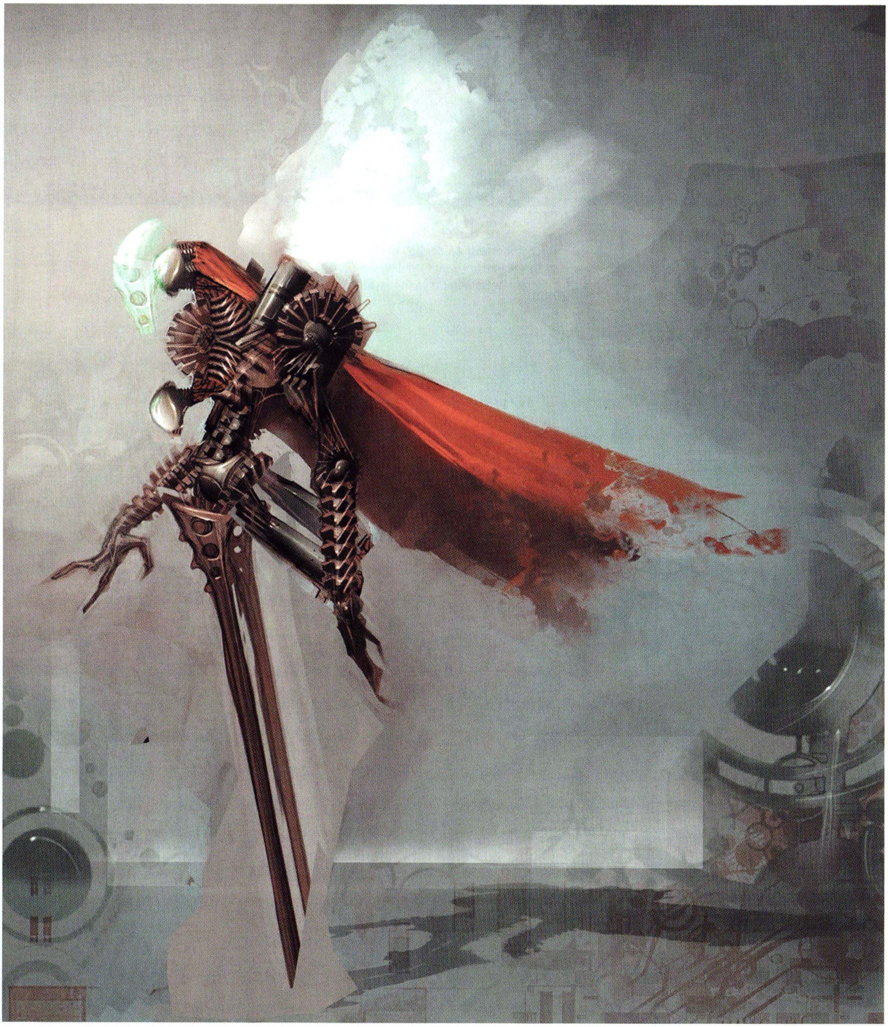


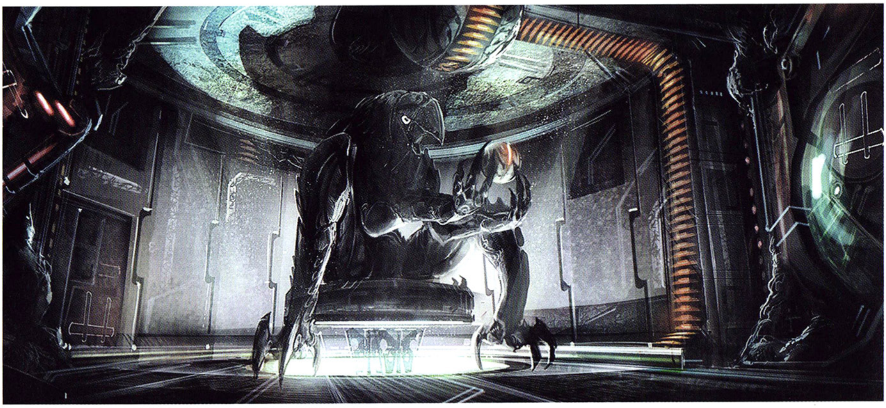


RIGHT ▶
Sketches for sky-color comparision

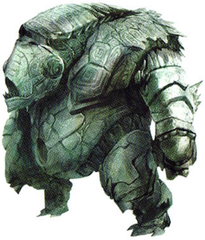
BELOW ▼
Skytown Steamlord worker drone commander

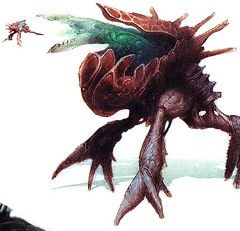


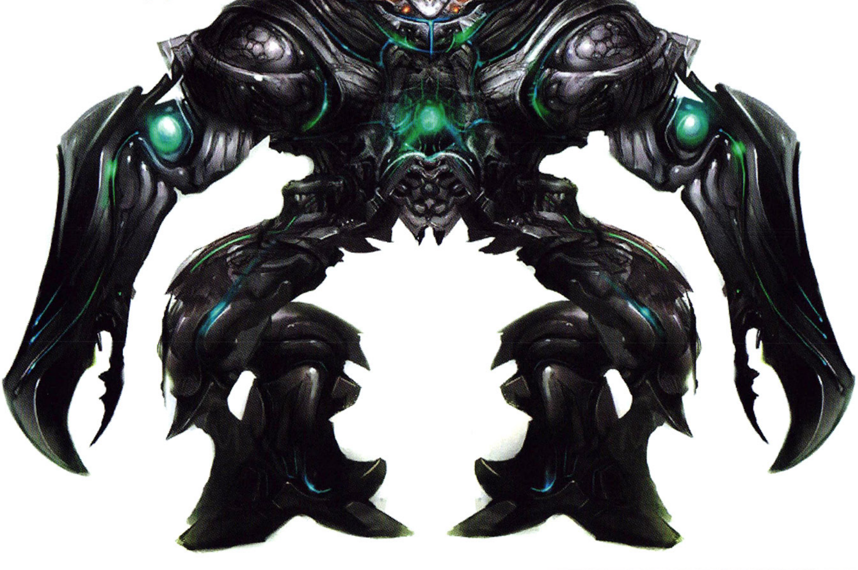




CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
Chamber with Spider Ball track; Fargul Hatcher with Fargul Wasps; Pirate Berserker; Bryyo Golem relic

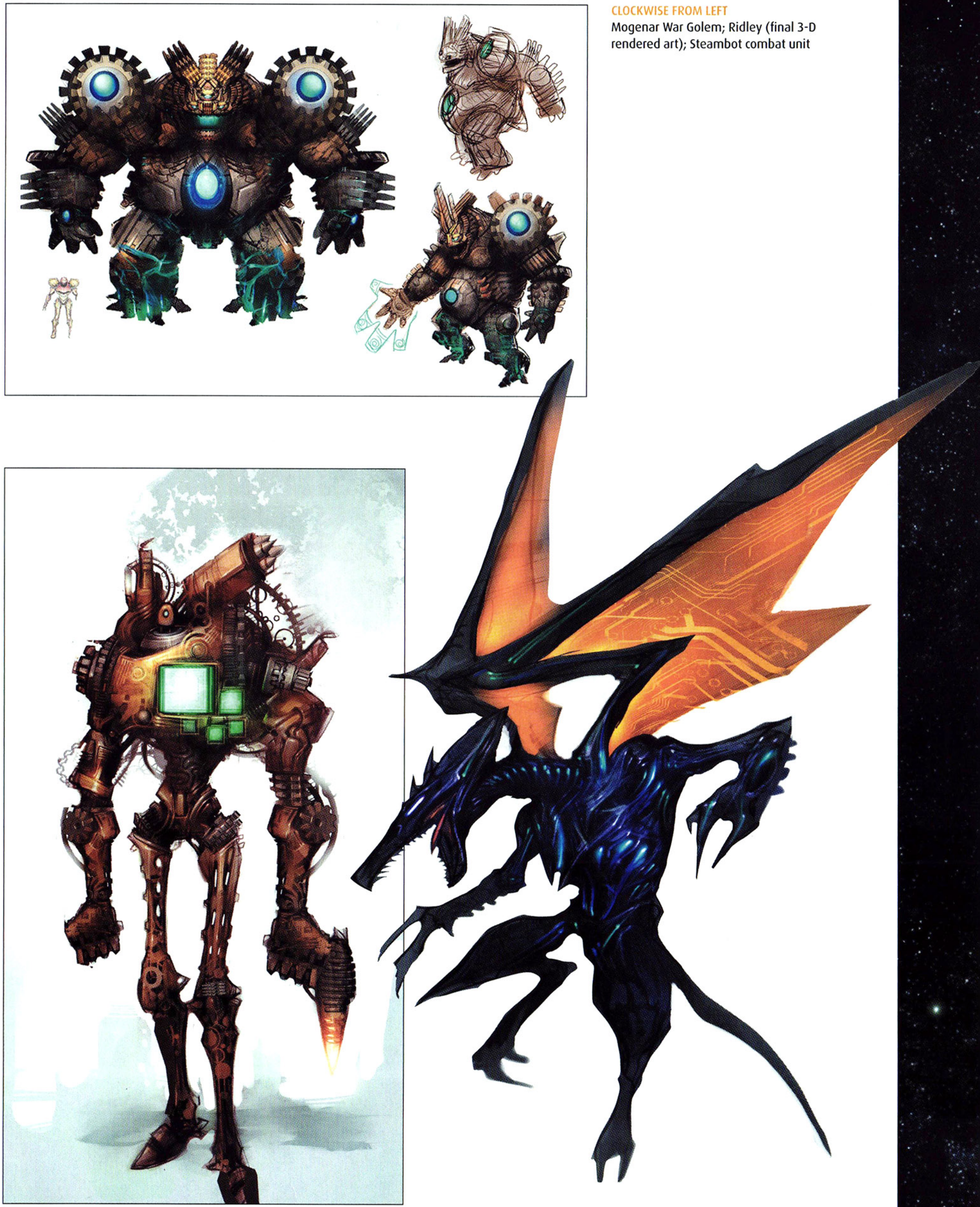






CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Mogenar War Golem; Ridley (final 3-D rendered art); Steambot combat unit



WAR IS SWELL

Total war has come to Wii with Battalion Wars 2, and it couldn't be cuter or more enjoyable.

By Drew Williams

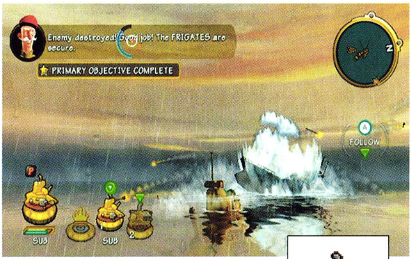
© 2007 Nintendo

The original Battalion Wars for GameCube launched a real-time, ground-level invasion of the top-down, turn-based universe popularized by Advance Wars in GBA. Gamers were finally able to take direct control of units and get their hands dirty—but not bloody—fighting with bulbous, adorable tanks and aircraft. Now a sequel to the surprise hit takes aim with the Wii remote to blast away your preconceived notions about real-time strategy games.

I Want to Be under the Sea...

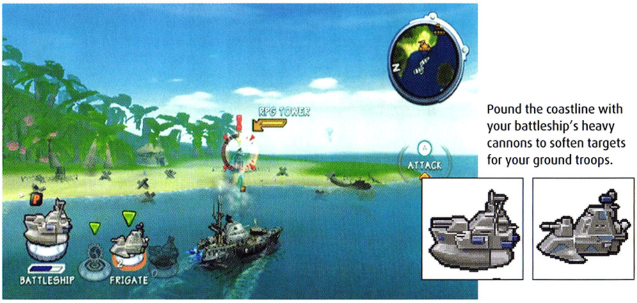
In Battalion Wars 2 (BWii), the Solar Empire, Western Frontier, Anglo Isles, Iron Legion, Tundran Territories, and Xylvania are all fighting over a mysterious super weapon, and major events in this struggle are explained in colorful cinema scenes that bookend the different campaigns. But the BW franchise isn't about advancing a story; it's about advancing through enemy fire.

The original Battalion Wars allowed you to scorch the earth using air and ground units, but ignored a major part of the earth's surface. Not so in BWii. Five of the six nations have impressive fleets that can take the fight to the high seas when the situation calls for it. The ships are, for the most part, fairly sluggish, but they can unleash devastating firepower. Battleships, for example, can fire long-range artillery shells at land targets while staying safely out of the range of ground units. However, the imposing vessels (and their larger cousins, the uberpowerful Dreadnaughts) are highly vulnerable to attacks from the sea. Submarines are particularly deadly predators. They can dive under the water for short periods of time to avoid detection and fire torpedoes. Your only defense against subs are other subs and relatively nimble frigates armed with depth charges.



Enemy destroyed! Good job! The FRIGATES are secure.

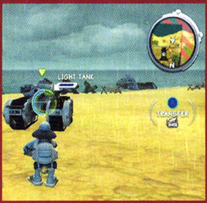
You sank my battleship! Submarines can hide from the big guns of their prey by diving underwater with a flick of the nunchuk.



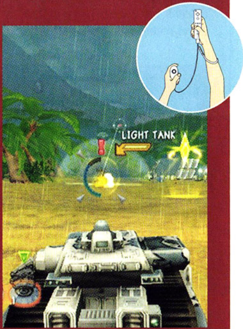
Pound the coastline with your battleship's heavy cannons to soften targets for your ground troops.

COMMAND BY CURSOR

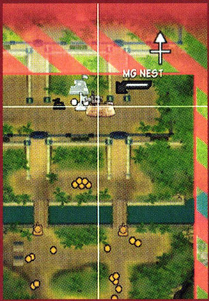
The Wii remote's IR functionality allows you to point at then select units and targets, plus control the camera. You can also navigate the map with ease.



Move your command unit using the Control Stick on the nunchuk. You can assume control of other units by selecting them with the cursor then pressing the A Button.



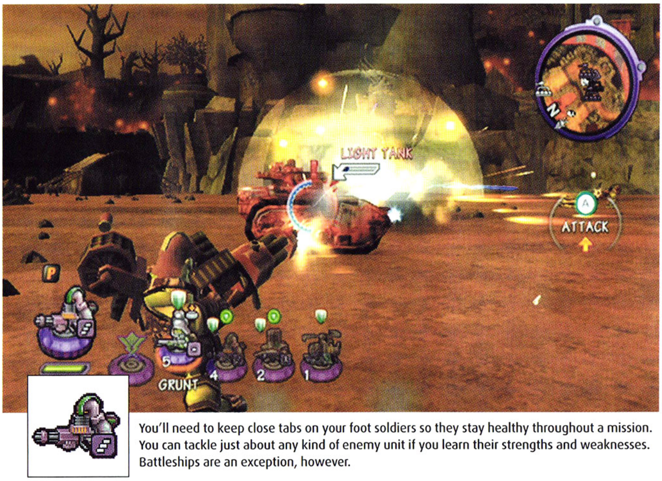
To target an enemy, highlight it with the cursor then hold down the Z Button. You can fire directly at an enemy or order other units to attack it.



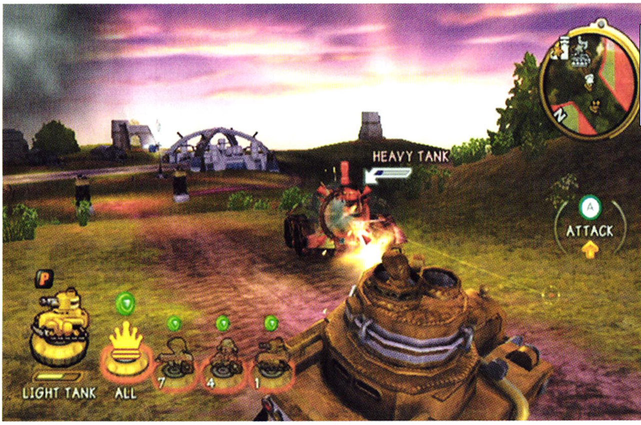
Press the Minus Button to bring up the map, then scan the positions of units and landmarks.

This Land Is My Land

The navy is an important and powerful new tool in the Battalion Wars arsenal, but the ultimate goal in most battles is to capture or defend territory. For that you need versatile ground forces. Grunts and other veterans are the foundation of BWii's armies—if you protect them well and deploy them properly, they can use their mobility and varied weapons to crush mechanized enemy forces. Anti-air vets—which take out planes and choppers with surface-to-air missiles—are particularly effective. Bazooka vets and mortar vets are indispensable when you face tanks and entrenched enemy positions. Victory often depends on how you manage these vulnerable forces, so you'll learn quickly not to send them into a hail of machine-gun fire. For strong, frontal assaults, you'll need to bring in some heavy-metal reinforcements.



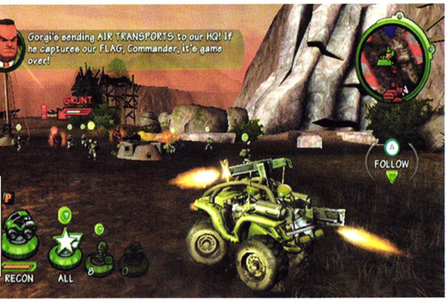
You'll need to keep close tabs on your foot soldiers so they stay healthy throughout a mission. You can tackle just about any kind of enemy unit if you learn their strengths and weaknesses. Battleships are an exception, however.



Tally ho! Light tanks may lack the firepower of some of the other mechanized forces, but they do a bang-up job clearing the way for foot soldiers.

In WWII, Patton and Rommel proved that tanks are an indispensable component of a modern army, and BWii's level design does nothing to dispel that notion. The light and heavy versions of each army's tanks can blast big targets with their cannons and also whittle down ground forces with autofiring machine guns. The mother of all tanks, however, is the devastating battlestation—these heavily armored juggernauts have guns jutting out of them at nearly every angle. They are immensely useful and powerful, but must be used with extreme care—you usually get only one of them, and you'll miss it when it's gone. Other ground vehicles are built for more-specific goals, like the slow anti-air vehicles and artillery units or the speedy recon vehicles. If you master their various functions, you will have no trouble conquering and holding terra firma.

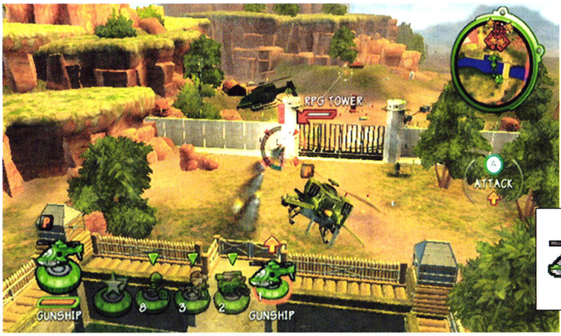
Go kicky fast to the front lines in a lightly armored recon unit. Make sure your gunner keeps those grunts off your tail.



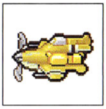
Gorgi's sending AIR TRANSPORTS to our HQ! If he captures our FLAG, Commander, it's game over!

Feel It Coming in the Air Tonight

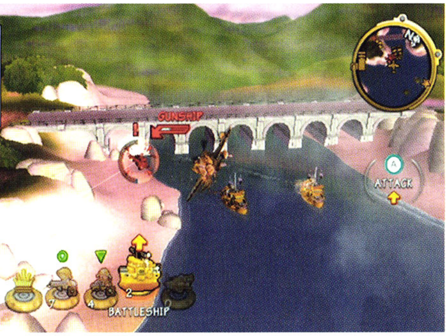
If a nation achieves air superiority in a conventional war, its victory is nearly assured. Fighters, helicopter gunships, and bombers rule the skies during many of BWii's battles. When your forces are on the ground during one of those battles, there is a genuine feeling of unease as you scan the skies for airborne threats (especially if you're fresh out of anti-air units). Hopefully you'll inspire the same level of fear in your enemies. If you can master the controls—targeting enemy units can be challenging when you are in a fast-moving fighter, for example—you'll terrorize the skies and take out piles of enemies in dogfights. It's also a lot of fun to barnstorm enemy positions while you unleash missiles or machine-gun fire. Bombing missions are rare in the game, but you'll probably play them many times to re-experience the chaotic mess you create on the ground. Perhaps the most effective ground support weapon is the helicopter gunship. The hovering vehicles can make short work of just about any ground target, but they can't take too much fire before they go up in flames and litter the battlefield.

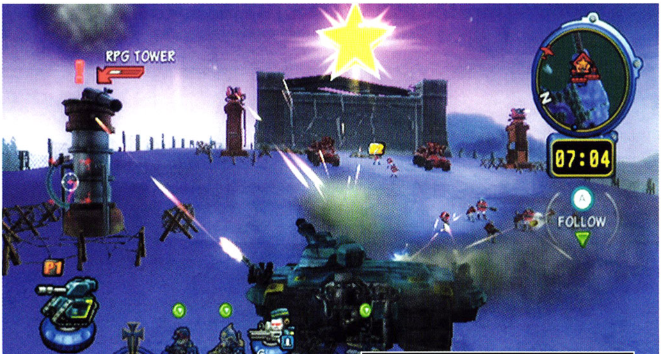


Hovering doom hangs in the sky, just beyond the range of small-arms fire. Clear the way for your grunts to capture the flag.

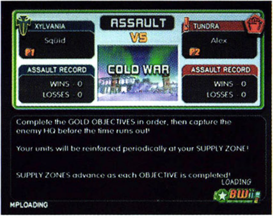


Anti-air vets aren't your only line of defense against helicopters. Blast them out of the sky using fighter planes!





Take control of the Xylvanian war machine in an online Assault mission. BWii's graphical improvements over its GameCube predecessor are reason enough to give the game a look, and the improved control scheme and online missions will win over even the staunchest critics of the "wars."



ASSAULT RECORD
WINS - 0
LOSSES - 0

ASSAULT RECORD
WINS - 0
LOSSES - 0

Complete the GOLD OBJECTIVES in order, then capture the enemy HQ before the time runs out!

Your units will be reinforced periodically at your SUPPLY ZONE!

SUPPLY ZONES advance as each OBJECTIVE is completed!

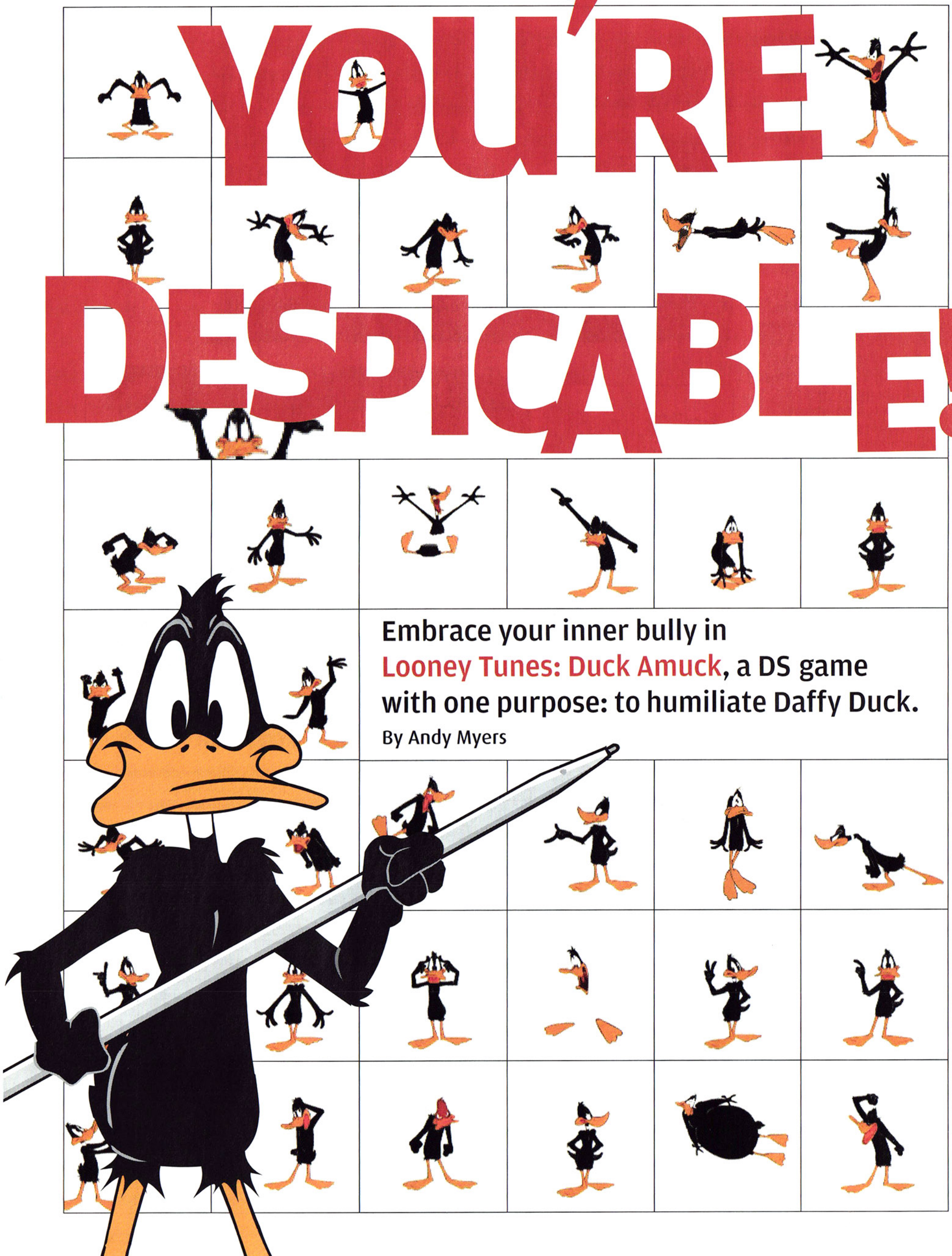
LOADING

MPLOADING

War: What It Is Good For

Perhaps due to its colorful characters, such as the Western Frontier's bare-midriffed Brigadier Betty or the Tundran Territories Tsar Gorgi, Battalion Wars has picked up a cult following that should greatly expand thanks to BWii's online gameplay. The WFC (Wi-Fi Connection) mode will allow you to team up with or play against a friend or a random person who wants to get in a dustup. There are three basic mission types: Co-op, Assault, and Skirmish. Co-op allows two players to team up in a battle against a CPU-controlled enemy, while Assault and Skirmish pit two online foes against each other in pitched battles. The epic scale of the battles in both the single-player game and the online missions is sure to please fans of shooters and real-time strategy games alike. Once you get a look at BWii's beautiful battle environments and tongue-in-cheek cinema sequences, you'll hope that the fighting rages on for a long time.

YOU'RE DESPICABLE!



Embrace your inner bully in Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck, a DS game with one purpose: to humiliate Daffy Duck.

By Andy Myers

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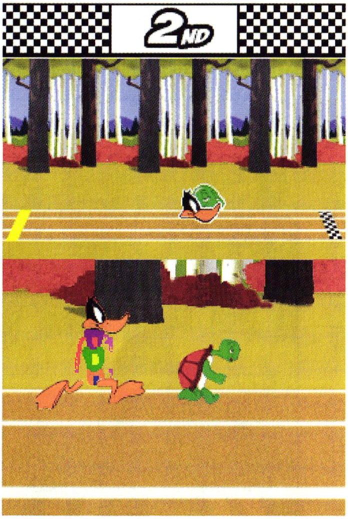
In most video games, you assume the role of a character, and the goal is to help that character succeed. Neither is true in Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck, a game that pits you *against* the main character, Daffy Duck, with the goal of irritating him until he flips his lid. It's like this: Daffy is trapped inside your DS, and you'll use the stylus to poke him, prod him, slice him, fling him, blow him up, and humiliate him as he emphatically objects every step of the way. The game's simple yet unique interface is a fully animated Daffy, complete with voice acting, on a white background (much like the 1953 Looney Tunes episode that lends the game its title)—you'll antagonize Daffy with stylus strokes and other techniques to trigger torturous minigames. Join us for a look at Duck Amuck's eclectic collection of activities, as well as a sneak peak at the upcoming Wii game Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal.

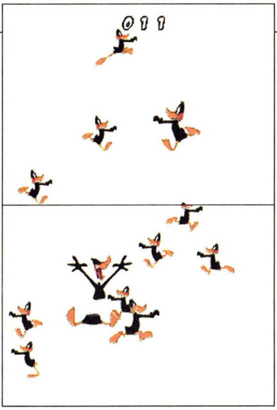
Body Erase

Use your stylus to tear a hole in the white background behind Daffy, and you'll trigger the Body Erase minigame. This game gives you the pleasure of erasing Daffy's body, then using paint tools to redraw Daffy any way you like. Once you're satisfied, take your new-and-improved version of Daffy onto the racetrack for an embarrassing spectacle of sports, in which you must swipe the stylus to run, jump, and duck, and blow into the microphone to shoo away pesky bee swarms.



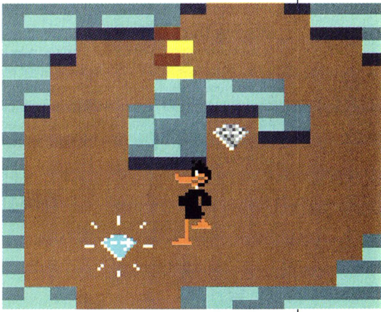
Daffy Divided

At any point in the game, a quick stylus swipe will slice poor Daffy in two. This outrageous act will launch a minigame in which multiple Daffys are running around both screens. Each time you slice one with the stylus, he'll multiply into two smaller Daffys. And to complicate things further, bombs keep showing up on the lower screen. You must use the stylus to fling bombs to the upper screen, where they'll explode and knock the Daffy clones to the lower screen. Hack like crazy with your stylus until no ducks remain.



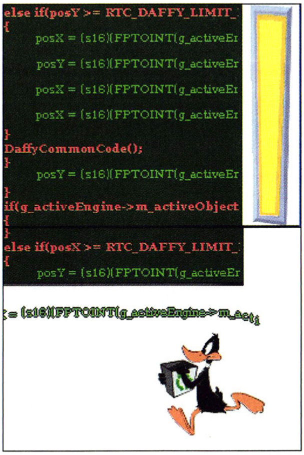
Diamond Mine! Mine!

Sometimes Daffy himself will have an idea for a game, which you can then access by tapping the light bulb above his head—but it's never quite what he intends. In the case of Diamond Mine! Mine!, Daffy's dream to star in a strategy adventure game comes true, but as a late-'70s adventure game. The pixels get larger and the music turns to blips and beeps as Daffy tries to collect a diamond on each level. You must use the stylus to drag the diamond from screen to screen, eluding and distracting Daffy all the way. If Daffy loses, you win.



Recycle the Code

In the cartoon episode that Duck Amuck is based on, Daffy often addresses the animator directly, calling his skills into question. In Duck Amuck for DS, Daffy does the same to the game programmers. When the visuals start bugging out onscreen, Daffy pulls back the curtain to reveal the game's shoddy code, which kicks off this clever minigame. As the code comes scrolling down the screen, you must use the stylus to drag lines of green code into Daffy's recycle bin until the compiler on the right is empty. Tap the red lines of code to tweak out Daffy for some funny effects.



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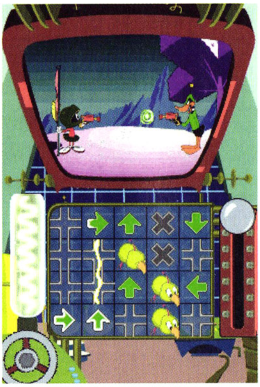
```

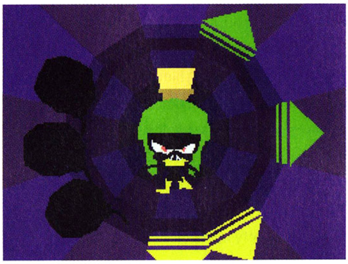
Duck Dodgers

If you poke Daffy a few times with your stylus, he'll walk offscreen and return with three cans of paint. These are used to trigger minigames by painting either Daffy or the background different colors—paint him blue to start a puzzle activity based on Duck Dodgers, Daffy's sci-fi alter ego. The minigame involves rotating arrows to define the path of an electrical circuit, while intermittently cranking a generator wheel to keep electricity flowing. If you can guide the electricity from the generator to the switch, Daffy will be zapped by the blast from his own gun, and he'll be thoroughly irritated.



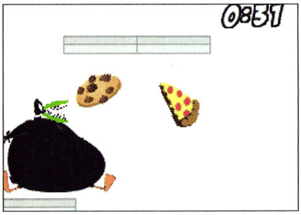
Low Poly Daffy

Daffy's foray into the world of 3-D video games is a few years outdated in this low-polygon minigame. As a giant Marvin the Martian head looms in the background, you must use the stylus to spin the tunnel, steering Daffy into bombs. If Marvin's head catches up with Daffy, you win.



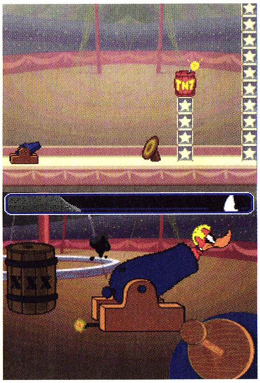
Missing Duck Bill

At the start of this minigame, you'll have to draw in Daffy's bill using a paint editor. (We recommend an alligator mouth, but it doesn't actually matter.) As food comes flying across the lower screen, grab it with the stylus and fling it upward to fatten Daffy up. When he reaches maximum plumpness, he'll pop and you'll move on to the next round.



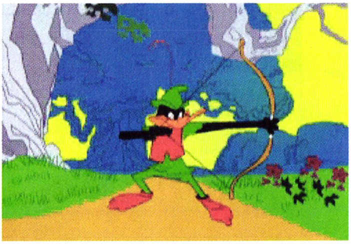
Load the Cannon

Painting Daffy's background yellow will kick off a circus-themed minigame. Use the stylus to fill the cannon with scoops of gunpowder from a nearby barrel—the more gunpowder you put in, the farther Daffy will fly. With the cannon loaded to your liking, change its trajectory by cranking the wooden wheel, and aim for the TNT. If Daffy suffers an explosive landing, consider yourself successful.



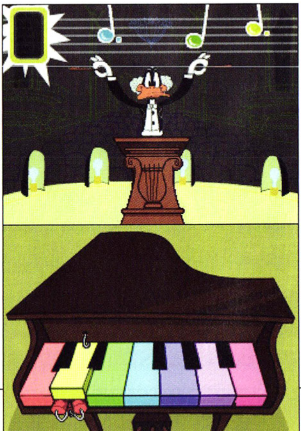
Robin Hood Daffy

With Daffy flying through the sky in his Robin Hood disguise, you must be the wind beneath Daffy's wings by blowing into the DS microphone. Watch out for rocks and trees, and when you near the end of the course, guide Daffy to a collision with the Sheriff of Nottingham.



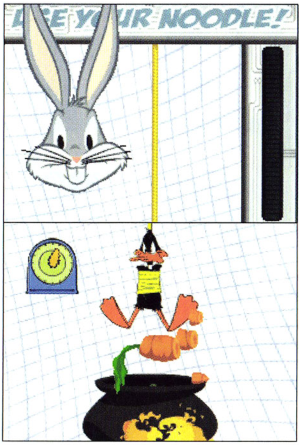
Exploding Piano

This rhythm game involves following Daffy's mad conducting skills by playing the color-coordinated keys on the correct beats. But if Daffy directs you to play a key that's been rigged with TNT, play a different key instead—he'll be so irritated that he'll step in front of the piano and show you how it's done. You can probably guess the outcome.



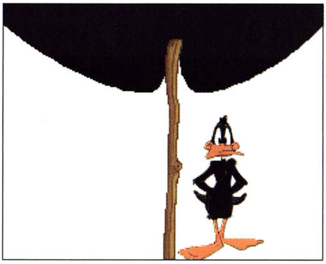
Use Your Noodle Soup

Mmmm, duck soup. Follow Bugs Bunny's instructions on the upper screen and use the stylus to slice veggies and fill the pot. Each type of veggie can be cut only one way, so you'll need to watch Bugs carefully to fill the pot before time runs out. And if the flames get low, blow into the microphone to stoke the fire.



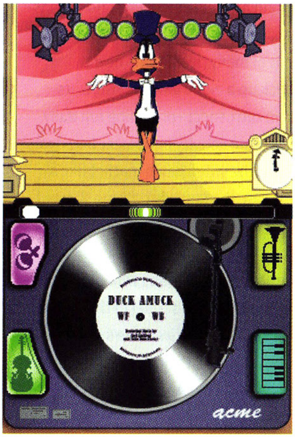
The Bleeding Black

The classic moment from the original *Duck Amuck* cartoon is when the background starts to cave in around Daffy, and he props it up with sticks. On your DS, you can thwart his efforts by rolling and breaking the sticks with your stylus. Roll the sticks near Daffy, then break them to inflict maximum damage to Daffy's cranium.



Song and Dance Daffy

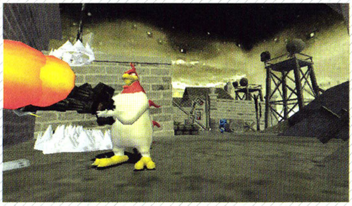
Look out, vaudeville! Daffy's got some fancy footwork, but you can throw it off by changing the speed of the record he's dancing to. Choose the correct song on the record-player interface, then spin the record around with your stylus. If you can keep the speed within the moving tempo indicator, Daffy's routine will be ruined and the audience will show their displeasure.



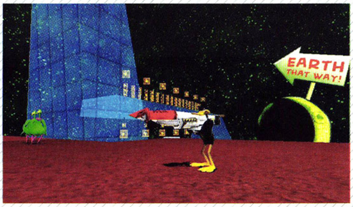
ACME ARSENAL

Looney on Wii

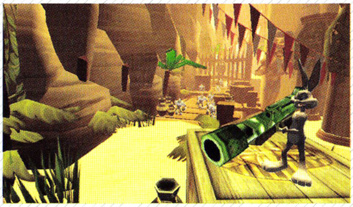
A Looney Tunes game is on its way to Wii this September, but it's quite different from Duck Amuck. In Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal, you'll brawl your way through various eras using Bugs, Daffy, Marvin the Martian, the Tazmanian Devil, Gossamer, and others, all armed to the teeth with silly weapons. Each level offers a humorous glimpse of history through the Looney Tunes lens—here's a bit of what we've seen of Acme Arsenal so far.



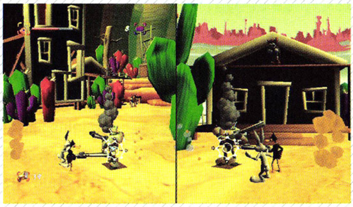
It's World War II, but with robots, and a giant chicken named Foghorn Leghorn.



Daffy's classic trip to Mars is revisited in Acme Arsenal, but this time Daffy and Marvin must team up.



Ancient Egypt will never be the same after Bugs and crew come through town.



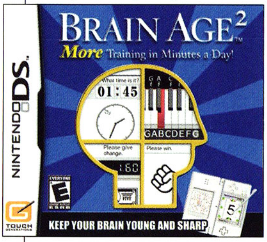
Grab a partner and head west for some co-op action!

A NEW AGE IN BRAIN TRAINING

This summer, Brain Age 2 brings a new crop of synapse-stimulating challenges to a huge and varied DS audience. How old is your brain?

By Drew Williams

The original Brain Age dug deep roots into billions of neurons around the globe and put DS systems into the hands of many people who never dreamed they would pick up a video game console. Its formula seems simple in retrospect—providing fun daily exercises that stimulate brain activity and foster personal satisfaction—but it struck the video game market like a bolt from the blue. In Japan, the game is nothing short of a cultural sensation—neuroscientist Dr. Ryuta Kawashima's floating, pixelated head has achieved celebrity status among the legions of fans who perform daily brain age checks. The Japanese sequel to the original training app actually surpassed the first title's sales numbers, so the phenomenon shows no signs of abating. Now Brain Age 2 is coming to North America, and it will force you to tackle brain training in totally new ways.


BRAIN AGE²
More Training in Minutes a Day!
NINTENDO DS
What time is it?
01:45
GABCDEFG
Please give change.
Please win.
EVERYONE
E
TOUCH GENERATIONS
KEEP YOUR BRAIN YOUNG AND SHARP

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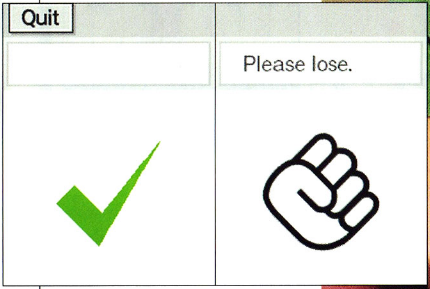
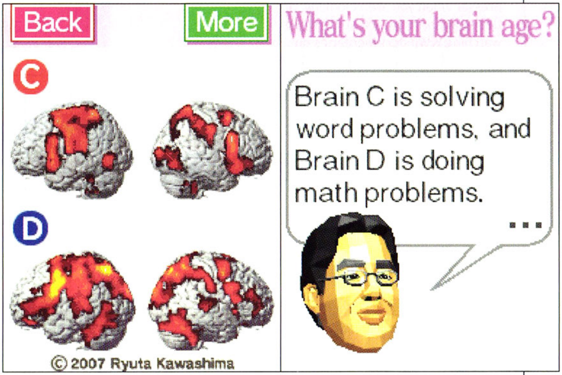
In case you haven't tried Brain Age before, here's the scoop: Dr. Kawashima's research has shown that daily exposure to simple mental tasks can help keep your brain in fighting shape for more-strenuous real-world challenges. Brain Age and Brain Age 2 are equally good at achieving that end, but they go about it in somewhat different ways. For example, Brain Age uses the Stroop test—which asks you to identify the color of words, even when the word spells out another color—to gauge brain age, while Brain Age 2 uses a mind-warping take on Rock, Paper, Scissors.

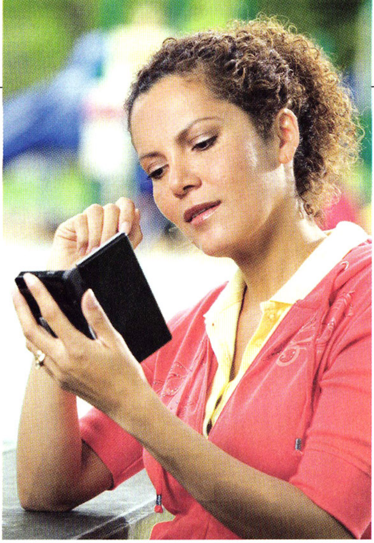


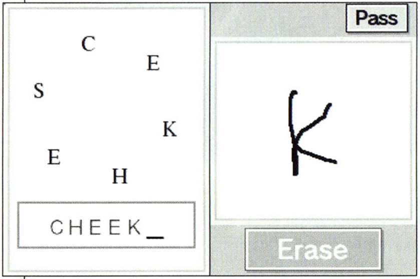
Please lose.

None of the exercises in Brain Age 2 are exactly the same as those in its predecessor, so fans of the series can continue with their original training while they branch out and try new activities (see "The Practical Brain" on page 56). Think of it as mental cross-training—it may even make you better at the original title. Both Brain Age iterations track your daily progress, so you can see which types of tasks are pushing you. If you don't already have Brain Age—or even a DS—now's the time to start training: the sequel will be bundled with a special-edition red-and-black DS, shown in some of the photos here.

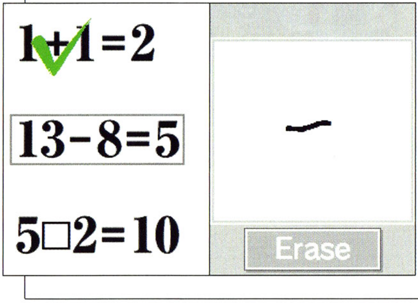


Brain C is solving word problems, and Brain D is doing math problems. ...




Pass
C
E
S
K
E
H
CHEEK_
K
Erase

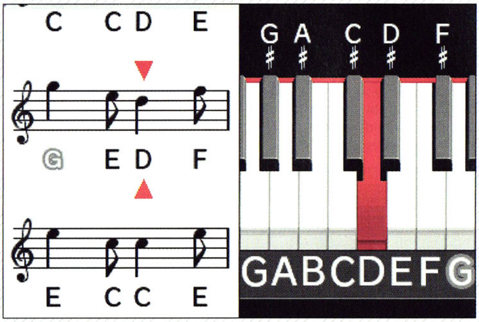
So you've decided to try out Brain Age 2. It's one of the few DS titles that Mom may snag from the top of your dresser when you aren't looking, or that Grandpa may pick up between watching WWII documentaries on cable. Get the whole family involved in daily brain training—then show them that they can never touch your perfect 20 score.


1+1=2
13−8=5
5□2=10
−
Erase

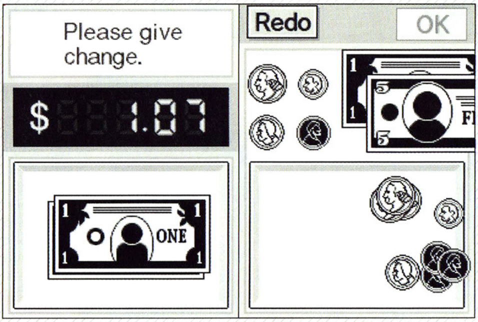
DON'T TRAIN IN VAIN

The Practical Brain

Brain Age 2 places more emphasis on real-world activities than its predecessor did, so it may help you when you go to the store to buy a snake. Or play Scrabble against NP's Drew Williams. Or perform at a piano recital. You know—stuff you do all the time.


C C D E
G E D F
E C C E
G# A# C# D# F#
GABCDEFG

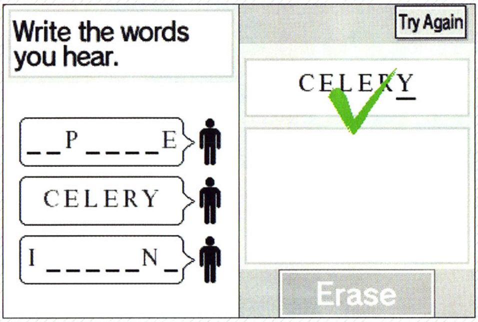
Piano Player challenges you to tap out the correct notes on the keyboard while you keep up with old songs that have fallen out of copyright.



Please give change.

Redo
OK
$1.07
ONE

Play Change Maker to practice making change like a pro . . . cashier.



Write the words you hear.

Try Again
CELERY
_ _ P _ _ _ _ E
CELERY
I _ _ _ _ _ N _
Erase

Word Blend trains you to hear up to three words spoken at the same time.

Rune Factory

A Fantasy Harvest Moon

From the universe of Harvest Moon comes a different farming adventure...

Till the land, grow crops, catch fish, make friends and *battle monsters!* Battling against fierce beasts is very important for your survival, but making friends with them is essential for your farm life.

...Coming August 2007

Tori

I'm so happy… you made it back… I was so very worried…

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EVERYONE

E

Mild Fantasy Violence

Use of Alcohol

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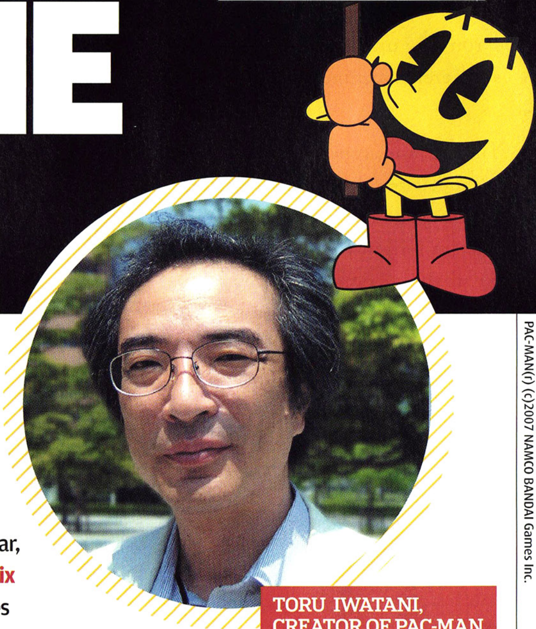
LEADER OF THE PAC

With Pac-Man fever spreading to DS and Wii, we thought we'd check in with the man who started the phenomenon, Toru Iwatani.

By Andy Myers



TORU IWATANI, CREATOR OF PAC-MAN

PAC-MAN(r) (c)2007 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc.

In 1980, Toru Iwatani successfully brought video games to the masses. He created Pac-Man, an arcade game that went on to spawn sequels, spin-offs, tournaments, toys, clothing lines, pinball games, a hit song, books, cartoons, and general hysteria. Though Mr. Iwatani retired earlier this year, his legacy lives on with **Namco Museum Remix** for Wii and **Namco Museum DS**, two new titles that feature Pac-Man in distinctive ways. We caught up with the Pac-Man man himself to talk about the new games and to find out what in the world he was thinking when he created the yellow, pizza-shaped hero in the first place.

Namco Museum Remix (Wii)

DS title Pac 'N Roll is one of five games being reimagined with Wii controls.

INTERVIEW

Nintendo Power: How does it feel to be responsible for arguably the most important video game ever made?

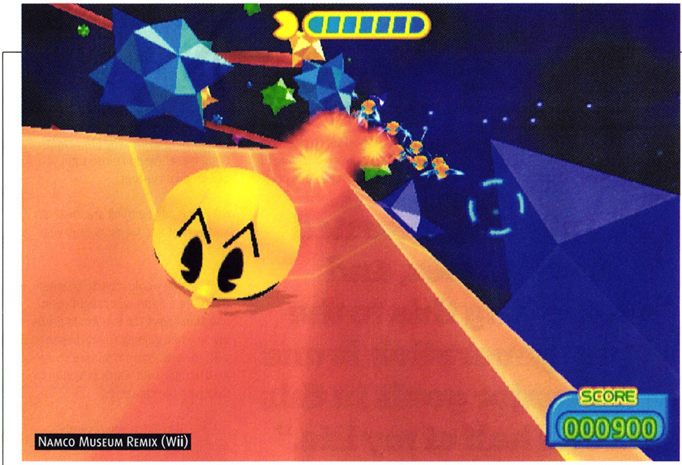
Toru Iwatani: The fact that Pac-Man was so well-received in the United States by so many people is something that I will always be proud of.

NP: Where did the basic idea for Pac-Man come from? Is the pizza legend really true?

TI: Yes, it's true! At the time, the only games at the arcades were shooting games geared towards males, and I wanted to make a game that couples could play together. From there I began considering something created around the theme of eating. Then one day while I was having pizza for lunch, I had a flash of inspiration that led to the birth of Pac-Man.

NP: What was it like creating and coding the original Pac-Man, back in the days when it was a fledgling industry with such small development teams?

TI: Back then we would first put together the framework of the game, and then spend over six months refining the gameplay and adjusting the difficulty. We also did numerous location tests. I think the secret to our success was our tireless efforts in creating a level design that players could play through over and over. Looking back, I think the reason we were able to devote that kind of time to the game's development was due to the small size of the development team and the project's low budget.



Space-shooter Galaga receives a major, Pac-Man-centric facelift.

> **“I think the secret to our success was our tireless efforts in creating a level design that players could play through over and over.”**

NP: Pac-Man was the first video game that reached out to the general public. What are your thoughts on the current state of the game industry and the emphasis on an “expanded audience”?

TI: As video game technology evolves, the costs for developing games rise. That means you have to sell a larger number of games to cover the cost of development. This is why the industry is trying to reach out to a larger audience. Unfortunately, it’s not as easy as you might think.

The only way you can expand the market is by appealing to those who have never played games before. I think the company that has the clearest vision in regards to this concept is Nintendo. Their hardware and software have expanded the market to females, children, and families, a group that is even larger than that of core gamers. I think this expansion of the market is a great chance for game developers.

NP: What was it like to work on Pac-Man Vs. with Shigeru Miyamoto?

TI: A few years back I received a proposal for a multiplayer version of Pac-Man from Miyamoto-san. When I got the chance to check out a prototype, I was amazed at how much research they had done on the original Pac-Man when creating this new, evolved version of the game. Of course, that’s the kind of quality I’ve come to expect from Nintendo.

The game was designed so that you connect a Game Boy Advance to a GameCube, and the player with the GBA controls Pac-Man while the other three players control the ghosts on the GCN. In fact, the game was so well-designed that it hardly took any time for me to approve it.

NP: What does it mean to have Pac-Man Vs. available on DS instead of requiring players to use GCN/GBA connectivity?

TI: You can play wirelessly with the DS, so there’s no need to switch hardware when a new player becomes Pac-Man. On top of that, the fact that the DS is portable means that players can enjoy a four-player game anywhere with one game card. It’s as if the game was originally designed for the DS!

NP: Who would win if you played Pac-Man Vs. against Mr. Miyamoto?

TI: If it were the original Pac-Man, I would have an advantage, since I’m familiar with the algorithms on which the ghosts’ movements are based. However, in Pac-Man Vs. the ghosts are controlled by human opponents, so I think it’s safe to say that either of us could win. I’d like to challenge him to a game of Pac-Man Vs.!

NP: Why do you think Pac-Man is so accessible and appealing, even to new players today?

TI: I think there are several reasons, such as its simple rules and controls, its strategic elements, the offensive and defensive aspects of the gameplay, the character design, etc.

NP: What did you think when Pac-Man became a cultural phenomenon?

TI: Pac-Man enjoyed a fair amount of success in Japan, but I was really surprised by how big of a hit it was in the United States. Its success also sparked my interest in the overseas market, which I had not really

PAC-MAN HIGHLIGHTS

1980

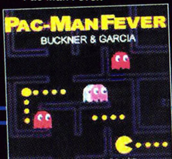
Pac-Man
At a time when most games were shooters set in outer space, Pac-Man turns the industry upside down by taking a wildly different approach, resulting in a cultural phenomenon.

1981

Ms. Pac-Man
The follow-up to the original Pac-Man hits the arcades. Aside from having a female lead and multiple game boards, Ms. Pac-Man is largely identical to its predecessor.

1982

Pac-Man Fever
Pac-Man becomes the first and only video game to inspire a top 40 radio hit, titled “Pac-Man Fever.”



considered very much up until that point.

NP: What aspect of Pac-Man are you most proud of?

TI: I would have to say the well-thought-out level design. If anything were added to or taken away from it, it wouldn't be the same. It has just the right balance.

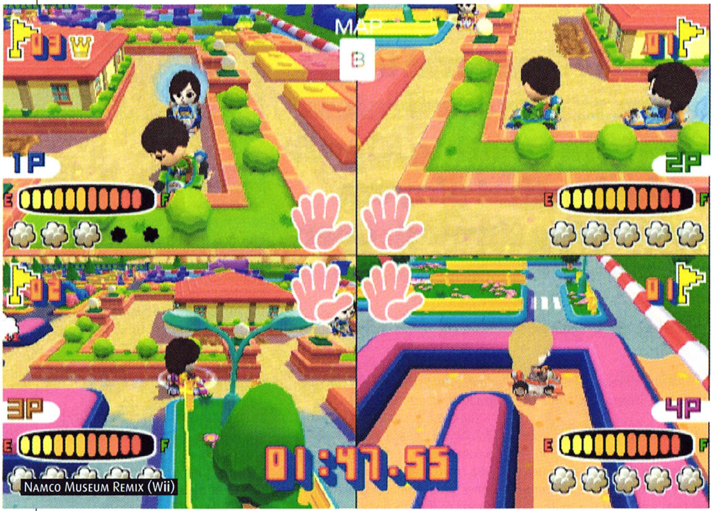
NP: How do you feel about the numerous Pac-Man spin-offs?

TI: I liked many of the Pac-Man themed items that have been released, such as a phone in the shape of Pac-Man. However, some of the licensed goods I've seen aren't really in keeping with Pac-Man's image. It has made me realize the importance of the proper management of licensing.

NP: How do you feel about Pac-Man's transition from an abstract, two-dimensional shape to a character in a 3-D world?

TI: I think it's important to change with the times, while maintaining the most important aspects of the original Pac-Man. Pac-Man's evolution into a 3-D character in this 3-D generation seems like a very natural progression to me. The important thing is that we don't lose sight of our original concept.

> **"A lot can be learned from games, and conveying this to the young generation is one of the major goals in this second half of my life."**



Pac-Man can mingle with your Miis in this remake of Rally-X.

NP: What do you think are the highs and lows of Pac-Man's 25-plus-year career?

TI: The high would have to be when the United States was caught up in Pac-Man fever! The low would probably be when gaming trends began to shift towards realism and we struggled to figure out which direction to take with the character.

NP: We heard that you recently retired. What are you doing with your free time nowadays?

TI: I keep myself busy. I teach a course in "gaming studies" to young students at Tokyo Polytechnic University. A lot can be learned from games, and conveying this to the young generation is one of the major goals in this second half of my life.

NP: Do you play video games in your spare time? If so, which ones?

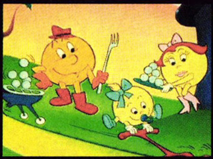
TI: I keep up on gaming trends as part of my job, but I hardly ever play them. I'm more interested in the creation of games than in actually playing them. I also teach my students that games are only one form of entertainment. I think that it's very important to learn and observe things outside of games, too.

NP: What do you think makes a video game fun?

TI: I would say a good game design that allows players to quickly come up with their own gaming strategies. If players think, "Hey, if I do this,

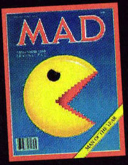
1982

Pac-Man animated series
A television series based on Pac-Man premieres on ABC.



1982

"Man of the Year"
Pac-Man graces the cover of MAD Magazine as Man of the Year.



1994

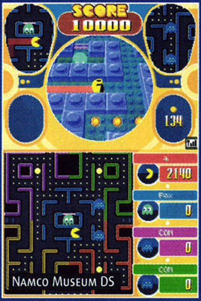
Pac-Man 2: The New Adventure
Pac-Man breaks out of the maze in this story-adventure game for Super Nintendo.

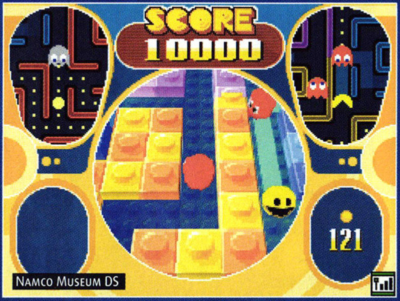
PAC-MAN 2
THE NEW ADVENTURES
SUPER NINTENDO
Nintendo
namco

WAKKA WAKKA!

Value Pac

One of the most unsung GameCube titles of all time is Pac-Man Vs. The multiplayer-only title put one player in the role of Pac-Man while up to three others played the parts of the ghosts in pursuit. Pac-Man Vs. was an absolute blast to play, but due to the game's stringent hardware requirements (you needed multiple GBAs and GBA-GCN link cables) and limited release, virtually no one played it. Thankfully, Pac-Man Vs. is coming to DS as part of Namco Museum DS. And the best part: you need only one game card to play wirelessly with up to four players!





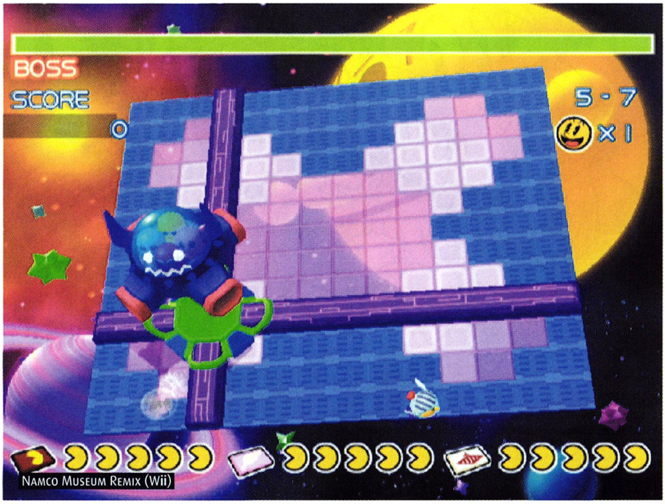
then I can beat this level," then they'll want to try out their strategy right away and have fun with it.

NP: Pac-Man has been in a lot of games, and now he's slated to be in the five remix games in Namco Museum for Wii. Do you think people will ever get tired of Pac-Man?

TI: Entertainment requires change and fresh, new ideas. Without them, people will certainly get bored. I'm sure that Namco Museum Remix will deliver fresh, exciting gameplay that can only be experienced on the Wii.

NP: Where do you see video games in 10 years?

TI: I think that a hybrid game system combining consoles, handhelds, arcade games, PCs, and mobiles may be developed. I think that it will not only allow users to play games, but also have social applications.



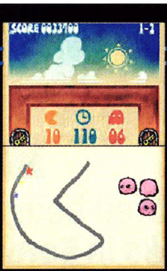
Obscure arcade title Motos is reinvented as Pac-Motos.

1999

Pac-Man World
The pellet-chomping hero becomes three-dimensional in a mostly underwhelming platformer for PlayStation.

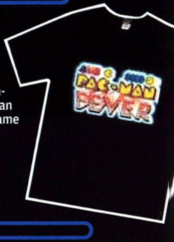
2005

Pac-Pix
A DS twist on the original, Pac-Pix allows players to draw Pac-Man, then direct him to chomp ghosts using the stylus.



2007

Pac-Man Fever Continues
Countless games, T-shirts, and lunchboxes later, Pac-Man remains a video game icon, and Namco Bandai's mascot character.



Deep Blue

Sega's fleet-footed hedgehog returns to the DS for some high-seas hijinks in **Sonic Rush Adventure.** By Steve Thomason

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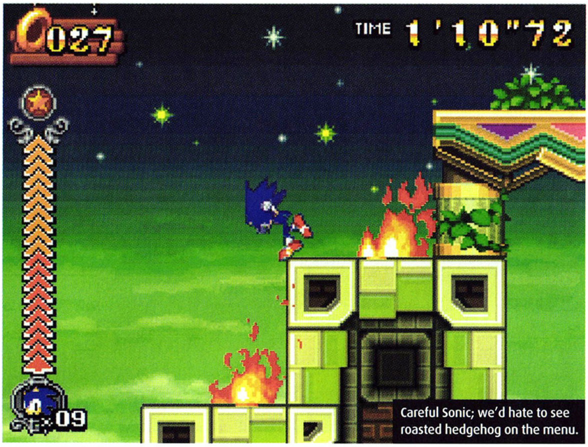
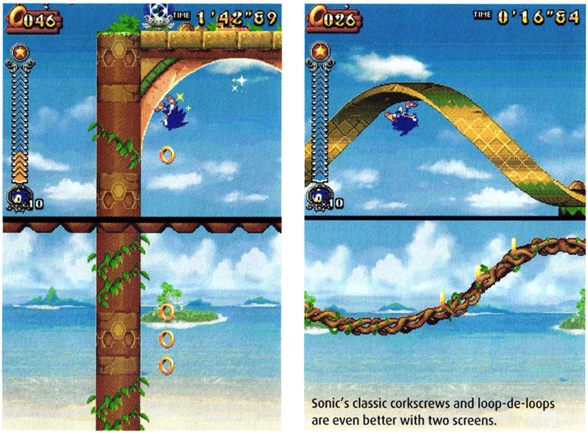
030
TIME 3'33"03
02

The quality of Sonic's home-console outings the past few years is a topic of much debate, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a fan of the blue blur who didn't enjoy 2005's Sonic Rush. The game returned the hedgehog to his side-scrolling roots and focused on the brand of high-speed, white-knuckle platforming that made him a household name in the first place. While Sonic Rush Adventure attempts to diversify the experience with some new adventure elements, it's careful not to stray too far from those core sensibilities.



Careful Sonic; we'd hate to see roasted hedgehog on the menu.



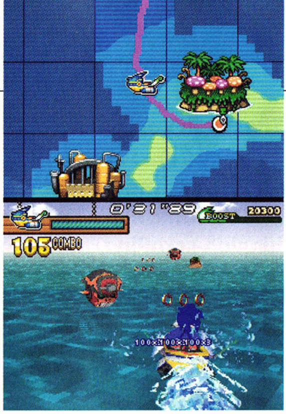
Sonic's classic corkscrews and loop-de-loops are even better with two screens.

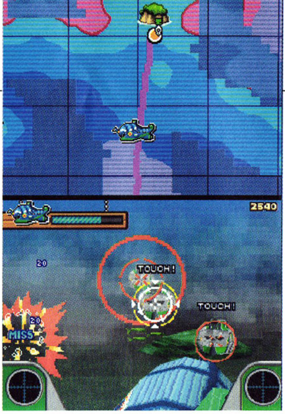
What a Rush

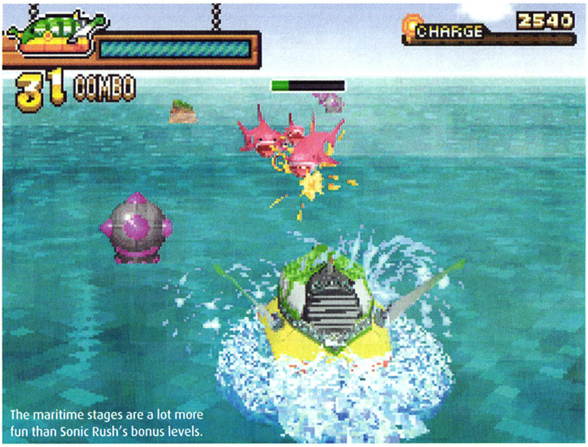
At its heart, Sonic Rush Adventure is still a 2-D platformer very much like its predecessor. The titular hero races back and forth across both screens, nabbing rings, avoiding obstacles, and dispatching enemies while (ideally) moving as fast as hedgehogly possible. He also retains all of the new moves that he learned in Sonic Rush, including the Hop Jump (which gives him a bit more on his vertical) and the Humming Top (which lets him attack enemies in midair). Perhaps most significant is the return of the trick system; when launched into the air or grinding along a rail, Sonic can perform tricks to fill his tension gauge. Doing so allows him to perform an ultraspeedy Super Boost that plows through any foe in his path. Additionally, Blaze returns as a playable character, and upon reaching a certain point in the game, you can tackle each stage with either hero.

As with the previous title, Adventure's visuals mix hand-drawn sprites with polygonal elements to fantastic effect, and the stages boast some wonderfully unconventional themes. Sonic will bounce around a forest of skyscraping mushrooms, zip through an industrial district filled with steam-powered machinery, and race across the deck of a haunted pirate ship. That's always been one of Sonic Team's strengths—staying away from the worn-out aesthetics of your typical fire stage, ice stage, and so on.

In keeping with the series' tradition of (barely) controlled chaos, each locale is filled with all sorts of crazy environmental gadgets that swing, hoist, and hurl our beloved hedgehog to and fro. (One of the coolest is a hang glider that allows Sonic to stay airborne as long as he follows a series of flashing arrows.) Additionally, some stages occasionally rotate the camera behind Sonic for a brief 3-D diversion such as an underground mine-cart ride. As the game's director, Sakae Osumi, puts it, "The best part of a Sonic game is the thrill of running through stages at high speed and experiencing the dynamic action. It's of the utmost importance that the player never feels bored. This is the aspect of the design that we put the most effort into." Judging by what we've played thus far, those efforts have definitely paid dividends. The game has a marvelous sense of flow, and really encourages you to get into a rhythm, flying all over the place and performing tricks to fill your tension gauge, then hitting the ground running







The maritime stages are a lot more fun than Sonic Rush's bonus levels.

with a Super Boost to avoid getting whacked by oncoming foes.

Though it may seem a relatively minor point, those who played the original Rush will also be delighted to know that bottomless pits are far less common in the follow-up. "That was mentioned as a major complaint by players of the previous title," reveals Osumi. "So it's something that we intentionally focused on when creating the stage designs." The game still offers a considerable challenge, but the decreased likelihood of suddenly falling to your death certainly cuts down on the degree of frustration.

Another way in which Adventure differs from its predecessor is that all of the boss battles take place on two screens. That not only lends the encounters greater visual impact; it also allows for some imaginative play mechanics. One of the bosses, for instance, is a floating robot that occupies the top screen while swinging big wrecking balls at you on the bottom screen. To defeat the mechanical monstrosity, you need to hit the balls with enough force to make them swing up into the top screen and hit the boss in the head. Good stuff.

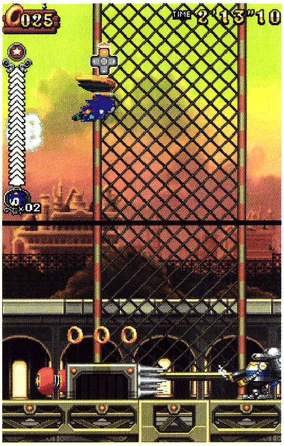
Hedgehog of the Sea

At the conclusion of each stage, Sonic returns to an island that serves as the game's central hub. There he can walk around in a full 3-D environment and speak with the island's inhabitants, tackle bonus missions to earn assorted unlockables (such as Chaos Emeralds), or access the game's Wi-Fi features, which include a two-player battle mode and time-attack leader boards. Your primary objective, however, is to chart a course to your next destination.

Each side-scrolling level in Sonic Rush Adventure is located on a separate island, and to get there you'll need to travel by sea. After using the stylus to draw a path on the world map, you'll actually play out Sonic's nautical journey via a 3-D minigame. Our hedgehog starts his adventure with a modest jet ski, which you steer by sliding the stylus left and right. Hitting a ramp gives you the opportunity to perform tricks by tracing the onscreen markers that appear, and doing so fills your boost gauge, which in turn enables you to increase speed and barrel through enemies. The controls work quite nicely, and the 3-D visuals are impressively smooth (these sections look much better in motion than they do in screen shots).

As you progress, you'll need better watercraft to reach islands that are farther out. Constructing each vehicle requires a certain number of raw materials, which you earn by completing side-scrolling stages. Every stage rewards you with a different kind of material, and the amount you receive is based on your letter grade for that stage (determined by your time, number of rings, and trick performance). In other words, you may need to play through certain stages more than once to collect the materials you need. Alternatively, you can search the map for hidden islands that may offer the same materials.

When it's all said and done, you'll be able to build five boats in total, and each one plays very differently. While aboard the galleon, for instance, Tails steers while you concentrate on blasting foes with your cannons by tapping the stylus. No matter what your mode of transportation, these minigames never feel like a chore that stands between you and the next side-scrolling stage. "One of the reasons we introduced these adventure aspects is that many players of the previous title asked for more features that use the stylus, and for more 3-D elements," adds Osumi. The nautical stuff allowed him and his team to grant those wishes without radically altering the basic formula. Sonic Rush Adventure retains everything that made its predecessor one of the best Sonic games in years (including a similarly funky soundtrack); the new features supplement that success rather than try to supplant it. If it ain't broke, after all, don't fix it.



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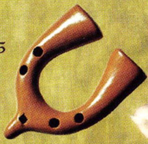
Flute is 5" long



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NARUTO'S DREAM

> "Someday I'm gonna be a Hokage..." —Naruto Uzumaki

NINTENDO POWER

PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES

October 2007

GRAND PRIZE

5 WINNERS!

Your quest to become the next ninja leader begins with our Grand Prize package of seven Naruto games plus a Wii and a Nintendo DS. Practice your jutsu (technique) in both battles and epic adventures, and seek perfection in all things.

GRAND PRIZE PACKAGE

- Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution
- Naruto: Path of Ninja
- Naruto: Ninja Council 3
- Naruto: Ninja Council 2
- Naruto: Ninja Council
- Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2
- Naruto: Clash of Ninja
- Wii console
- Nintendo DS Lite (Onyx)

Wii
NARUTO Clash of Ninja REVOLUTION
Wii Sports
NARUTO PATH OF THE NINJA
NARUTO NINJA COUNCIL 3
NARUTO CLASH OF NINJA
NARUTO NINJA COUNCIL 2
NARUTO NINJA COUNCIL
NINTENDO DS
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
GAME BOY ADVANCE
TOMY

SECOND PRIZE

20 WINNERS!

The path to enlightenment is strewn with trampled dreams. Don't despair, for 20 worthy Genin (perhaps you will be among them) will face the challenges of Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution for Wii and Naruto: Path of Ninja for Nintendo DS.

THIRD PRIZE

50 WINNERS!

Train for greatness while wearing the official NP Wiijutsu ninja-approved T-shirt. Believe it!

Wii
NINTENDO POWER

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PLAYER'S POLL VOL. 219
P.O. BOX 97062
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PRODUCTS RANGE FROM RATING PENDING TO TEEN
RP-T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Wii Channels

SAAAAY GAH!

Games for the Sega Genesis dominate this month's Virtual Console staff picks. In related news, certain NP writers reveal their true allegiance in the 16-bit wars.

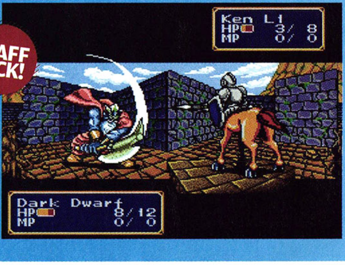
VIRTUAL CONSOLE

WHAT'S NEW IN RETRO GAMING!

VIRTUAL CONSOLE FEATURED PICK

SHINING FORCE

STAFF PICK!



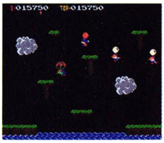
Platform: Sega Genesis
Publisher: Sega
Genre: Strategy RPG
Original Release: 1992

Steve's Pick

In my humble opinion, Shining Force stands as one of the greatest strategy-RPGs of all time. This Genesis classic is renowned for its impressive battle graphics, diverse cast of characters, and deep, addictive gameplay. Developed by many of the folks who went on to create Golden Sun, the game strikes a perfect balance between its strategy and role-playing elements. If you're a fan of the genre, this is absolutely required playing. Let's hope that the even-better Shining Force II follows quickly.

12

Games

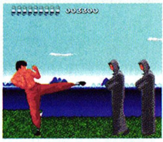


BALLOON FIGHT

Platform: NES
Publisher: Nintendo
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1986

WHAT: Nintendo's answer to early-'80s arcade hit Joust not only played as well as that game, but it possibly even one-upped it in the fun department.

WHY: There's something very endearing about a two-player game that's this easy to pick up and play. Highly recommended for arcade addicts. —PM



CHINA WARRIOR

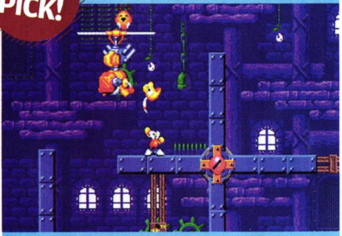
Platform: TurboGrafx16
Publisher: Hudson
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1989

WHAT: At first we thought China Warrior was some weird, unreleased WarioWare microgame, but it turns out it's actually supposed to stand on its own. The action scrolls automatically as you kick the same enemy over and over.

WHY: If you dig huge character sprites, really love Bruce Lee knockoffs, or just want a laugh. —CH

STAFF PICK!

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT



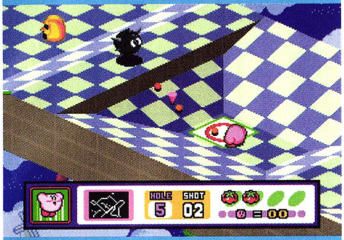
DYNAMITE HEADDY

Chris H's Pick

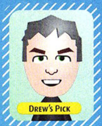
Platform: Sega Genesis
Publisher: Sega
Genre: Platformer
Original Release: 1994

You may have never heard of Dynamite Headdy before, but this platforming sensation is not to be missed. The second Genesis title from Treasure stars a puppet who uses his head as both a weapon and a grappling hook, and can even swap heads to gain new powers. Headdy holds up incredibly well thanks to its technique-filled gameplay and extremely imaginative levels.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT



KIRBY'S DREAM COURSE

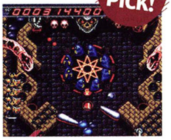


PLATFORM: SUPER NES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: SPORTS
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1995

STAFF PICK!

That irrepressible scamp Kirby isn't satisfied slurping up enemies and stealing their powers—he also has to humiliate them on the golf course. This SNES title borrows the power-bar interface from golf games and applies it to a bizarro-world obstacle course floating in the sky. If the only thing keeping you from playing golf video games is a hatred of the sport itself, then consider Kirby's Dream Course a puffy pink invitation to hit the links!

STAFF PICK!

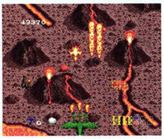


DEVIL'S CRUSH

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX16
PUBLISHER: HUDSON
GENRE: PINBALL
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1990

WHAT: Knock out enemies and shoot for a high score in this creepy, ahead-of-the-times video-pinball game.

WHY: If you're a fan of Pinball of the Dead (who isn't?), Devil's Crush will be right up your alley. Monsters wander around the screen as you bounce your pinball off skull-shaped bumpers. Crank up the rockin' music, too. —CS

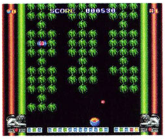


DRAGON SPIRIT

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX16
PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI
GENRE: SHOOTER
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1989

WHAT: Take to the skies using a dragon in this arcade-based shooter. Blast enemies in the air, and bomb the ones on the ground—sort of like Xevious, but with a much richer presentation.

WHY: There were plenty of shooters on the TurboGrafx, but how many of them let you grow extra heads as you power up? —CH

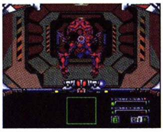


DROP OFF

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX16
PUBLISHER: G-MODE
GENRE: PUZZLE
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1990

WHAT: Get a bizarre take on the Bust-a-Move-style puzzle game involving loads of falling fruit.

WHY: Drop Off offers quite possibly the largest back story ever written for a puzzle game. A somewhat low difficulty level places an emphasis on racking up huge points over just trying to stay alive. —CS

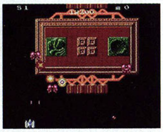


SILENT DEBUGGERS

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX16
PUBLISHER: G-MODE
GENRE: FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1991

WHAT: A very crude first-person shooter that takes place on a space station. Be the first debugger to eliminate all the monsters and find the treasure.

WHY: Your debugging buddy Leon looks like a long-lost, third member of the pop group Wham! And, no, we don't know what a debugger



STAR SOLDIER

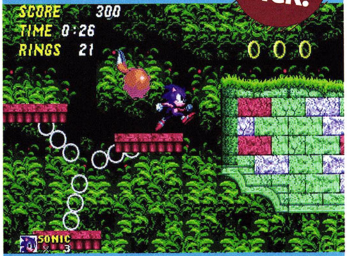
PLATFORM: NES
PUBLISHER: HUDSON
GENRE: SHOOTER
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1989

WHAT: A vertically scrolling space-shooter that looks like an early version of Super Star Soldier for the TurboGrafx16, because that's exactly what it is.

WHY: Because you like shooting stuff and your belief system forbids you from playing any games produced after 1989. —DW

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOT-

STAFF PICK!

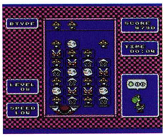


SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

STEVE'S PICK

PLATFORM: SEGA GENESIS
PUBLISHER: SEGA
GENRE: PLATFORMER
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1992

Sonic 2 is considered by many to be the pinnacle of the series. Though I'll always be partial to the original myself, it's easy to see how an argument can be made. The sequel introduces Sonic's trademark Spin Attack as well as sidekick Miles "Tails" Prower, and it boasts some of the most amazing level design in platformer history. The vibrant graphics look great even today, and the action moves at a blazingly fast clip (thank you, Blast Processing!). An all-time classic.



YOSHI

PLATFORM: NES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: PUZZLE
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1992

WHAT: Match up Goombas, Bloopers, and other Mario foes as they fall from the sky in this simple but challenging puzzle game. Collect two halves of a Yoshi egg to hatch the titular hero.

WHY: It's not as addictive as Tetris or Dr. Mario, but Yoshi will scratch your puzzle itch nonetheless. —CH

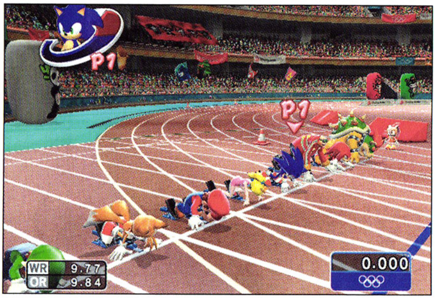
BEST OF SHOW

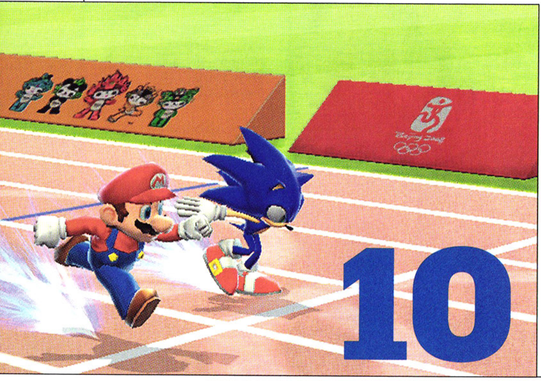
The NP staff picks the 10 games that stole the show at E3 2007.

This year's E3 may have been a much more low-key affair than in years past, but there was no shortage of great Wii and DS titles on display. After a surprisingly mild debate (it's rare for us to agree on things), we've hashed out our picks for the 10 most exciting games of the show, which we present henceforth. It bears noting that Metroid Prime 3: Corruption was left off due to its imminent release, and that Super Smash Bros. Brawl was conspicuous by its absence at the show.

Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games

Seeing actual gameplay of the longtime rivals challenging one another was enough to keep us hyped about Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games, but even better was the promise of a wide variety of events and intuitive controls. While we saw only the 100-meter dash (pump the remote and nunchuk up and down to run), the triple jump (pump the controllers, then raise the remote to jump), and the hammer throw (spin the remote around, then press B to throw), more than 20 authentic competitions will be included in the final game, plus less-realistic bonus events.





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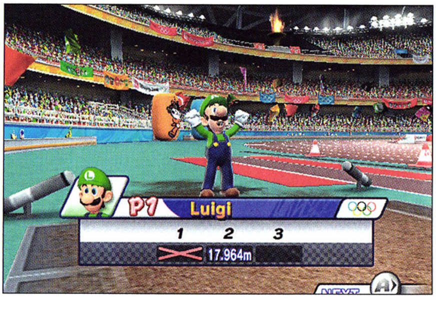
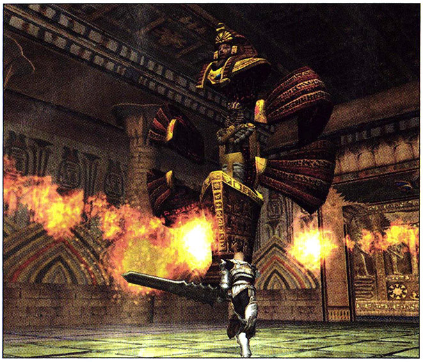


Soulcalibur Legends

Soulcalibur Legends has already come a long way since it graced our Volume 218 cover. We were able to see for the first time some of the bosses that you'll encounter—the giant, Egyptianesque fiend shown below gave us a particularly hard time. Despite the hack-and-slash look of Legends, precise movements are key to success in battle. Fortunately, the Wii remote is up to the task: accurate controller motions are essential for assembling devastating combos.



9

Ivy owes her perfect posture to the wonders of Wii Fit.

Wii Fit

What Brain Age does for your brain, Wii Fit intends to do for your body. No, you won't have the physique of a pro wrestler, but at least you might be able to climb a set of stairs without having to take a breather. All of Wii Fit's 40 activities utilize the new Wii Balance Board in one way or another: lean side to side to head soccer balls into the goal, step off and on the board in time to a rhythm game, or hold perfectly still for a mind-calming yoga pose, for example.

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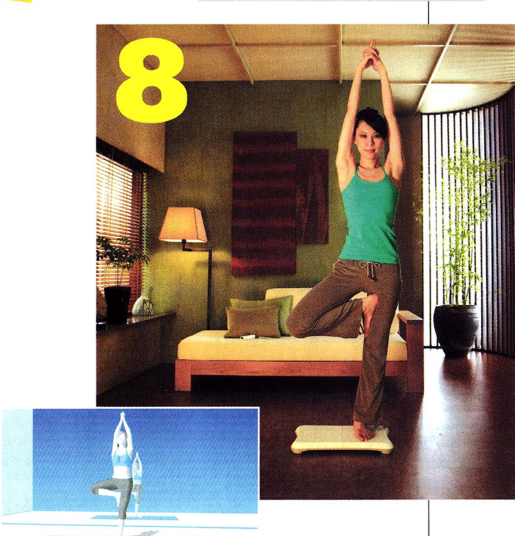
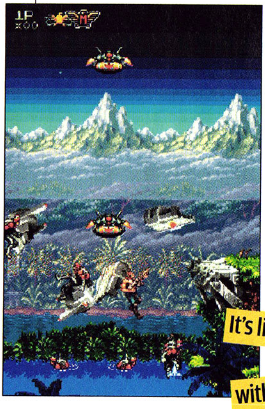


Zack & Wiki: Quest for Barbaros' Treasure

Capcom's quirky adventure title continues to endear us every time we see it. The game's wonderful visual style looks like a cartoon come to life, and the level-based puzzles we played at E3 were imaginative and quite challenging (a baby game for babies this most certainly is not). Plus, few other titles put the Wii remote to such fantastic use—you'll manipulate more than 80 unique objects over the course of your journey. Capcom also promises puzzle-based boss encounters, which we can't wait to see.

Contra 4

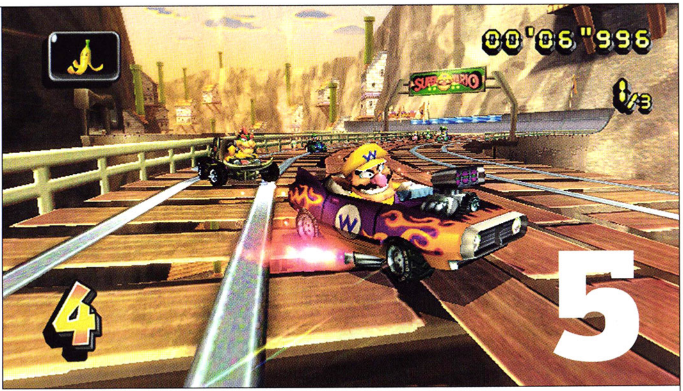
First the bad news: the four-player mode shown in early screenshots of Contra 4 was nowhere to be seen at E3, and the word is that it probably won't be part of the final game. The good news, however, is that the game is still shaping up to be incredible with just two players. The intense action is nonstop, and newly revealed stages like the alien lair look absolutely wicked. An old-school feel combined with new features such as a grappling hook should satiate all Contra fans.



It's like Rambo meets Aliens with an extra shot of awesome.

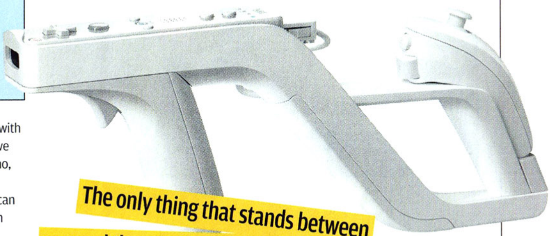
Mario Kart Wii

There was barely any information about Mario Kart Wii beyond a teaser video at Nintendo's press conference, and there was nothing even close to a playable demo, but the next iteration of the racing franchise still ended up being one of the major chat topics around the show. We know that there will be a slick-looking steering-wheel peripheral packed in with the game at launch. We know that there will be online play, including four-player battle mode. For anything more than that, we'll have to wait until we get closer to the game's early-2008 launch.

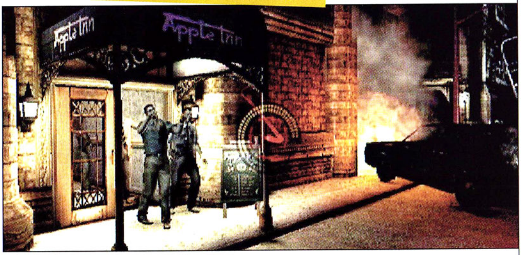


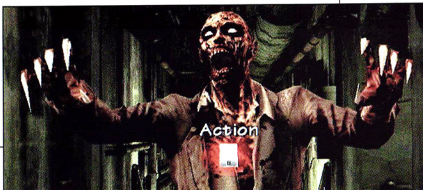
Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles

It took about 30 seconds of blasting undead with the Zapper to fall in love with Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles. Holding the Zapper like a tommy gun, we laid waste to probably more than 100 zombies during the brief, tantalizing demo, and it felt so *good*. You fire via the B Button trigger (on the front handle of the Zapper) and reload by shaking the controller. Unlike in most rail shooters, you can look around via the Control Stick, which you'll find useful for discovering hidden items behind obstructions. We're anxious to try it in two-player co-op mode.



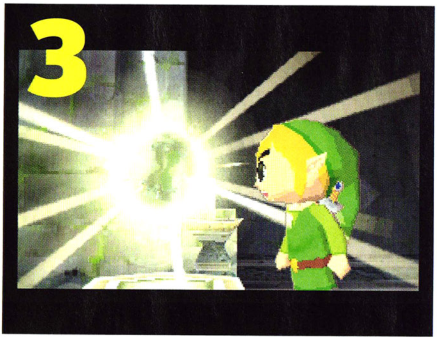
The only thing that stands between you and the zombie apocalypse.

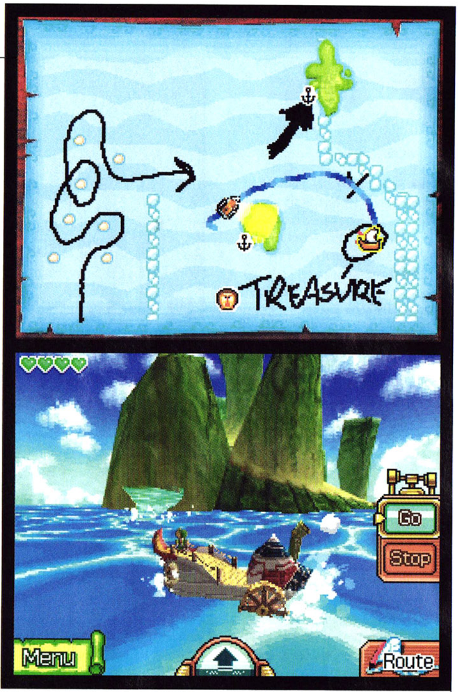




The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

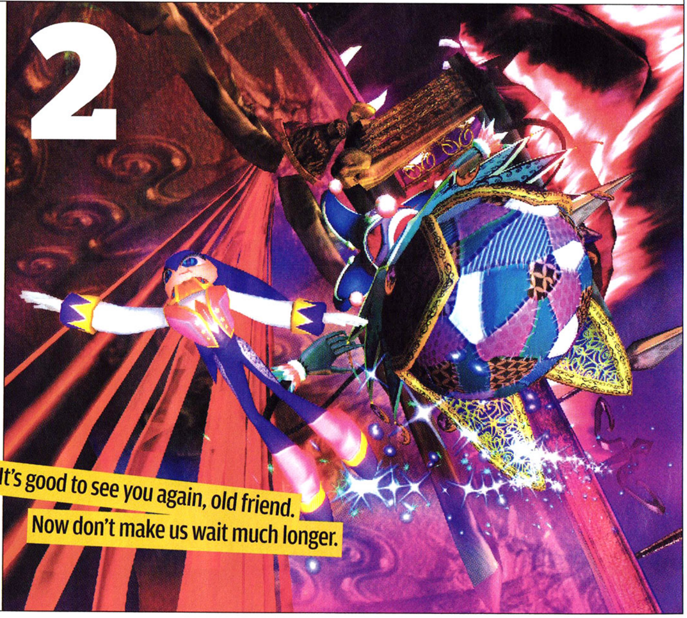
A few weeks before E3, The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass hit Japan with strong sales and impressive critical acclaim. No surprise there: It's the familiar exploration-based Zelda formula that fans have come to love, but reinvented with touch-screen controls, allowing for new types of gameplay and broader appeal. Phantom Hourglass looked great at the show—we can't wait to further explore the game's vast ocean and delve deep into the challenging Temple of the Ocean King.



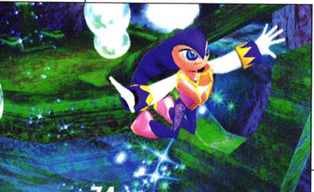


NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams

One of the highlights of E3 was that the playable demo of NiGHTS on display looked like, well . . . NiGHTS. Journey of Dreams seems to capture the spirit of the Saturn original perfectly, and the level we saw looked absolutely beautiful in motion. As in the first game, you'll be able to walk around freely as one of two kids before taking to the skies with the titular purple jester. According to Sega, however, those exploration elements will be a much more significant part of the experience in the Wii game.



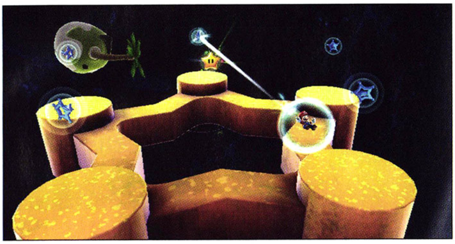
It's good to see you again, old friend. Now don't make us wait much longer.

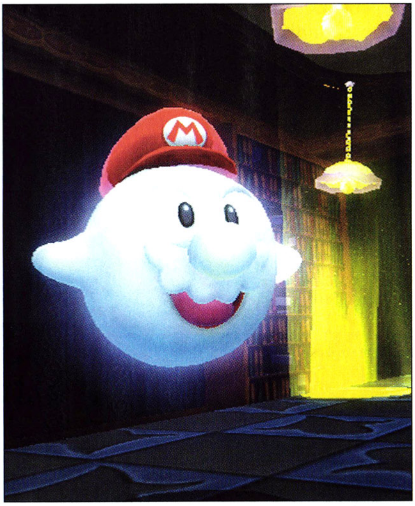


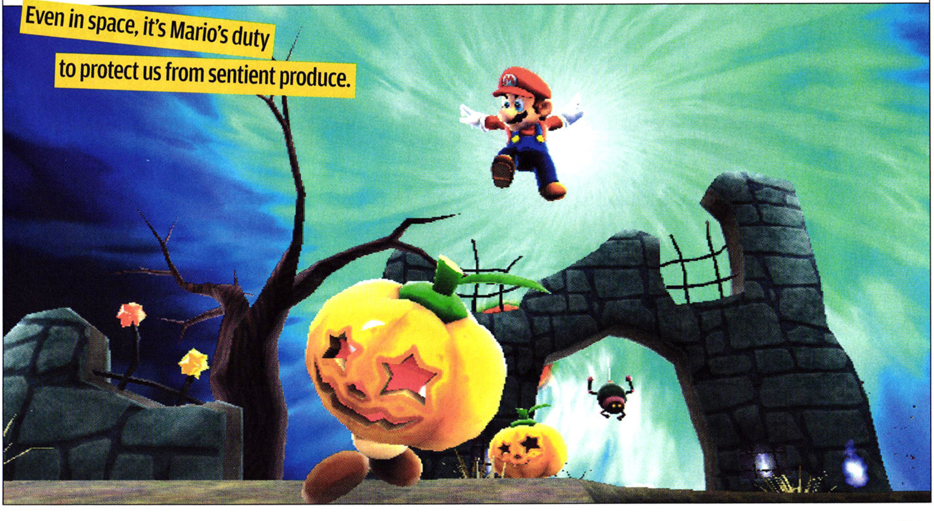
Super Mario Galaxy

Our unanimous pick for Game of the Show is jam-packed with so many incredible moments and brilliant gameplay mechanics that it was utterly impossible to play without sporting an ear-to-ear grin. Visually, Super Mario Galaxy puts most other Wii titles to shame, the controls are the paragon of perfection that we've come to expect from the mustachioed plumber, and the out-of-this world level designs are as awesome as they are unapologetically weird. Shigeru Miyamoto claims that he's more directly involved with Galaxy's development than he was with previous 3-D Marios, and thus far the results are nothing short of amazing.

1







Even in space, it's Mario's duty to protect us from sentient produce.

C Classified Info

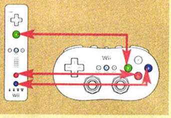
Nobody likes a cheater. Except us.

NINTENDO Wii VIRTUAL CONSOLE EDITION

The hits just keep coming on Wii's Virtual Console. Embrace your inner cheater with this retro edition of Classified Information, featuring some of the best secrets from the NES and SNES.

Take Control

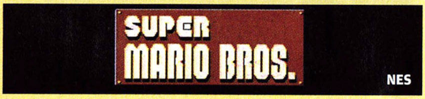
The codes listed on these pages are intended for use with Classic or GCN controllers, but you can enter NES codes using the Wii remote instead—substitute A for X, 1 for B, 2 for A, - for Select, and + for Start.



Full Power-Up

3 1P 0009100 HI 0050000

Although the infamous Konami Code is most closely associated with Contra, it actually originated in Gradius. Pause the game and press up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A. Unpause to receive a full payload of weapons.



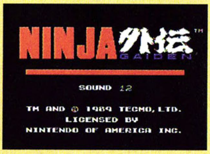
To Be Continued

This one's an oldie, but it's still a goodie. After your game is over and you're at the title screen, hold A and press Start. You will continue the game at the beginning of the world in which you died.

NINJA 外伝 GAIDEN
NES

Sound Test

Ninja Gaiden's not just cinematic and superchallenging—it also has one of the best soundtracks on the NES. To listen to its music at any time, press and hold down-left, A, B, and Select, then press Start before the title screen appears.



SOUND 12

TM AND © 1989 TECMO, LTD.
LICENSED BY
NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

After entering the code, a sound-test menu that appears enables you to listen to any of the game's music or sound effects. Press up and down to cycle through the different sounds, and play them using the A Button.

Hard-Hitting Passwords

Enter these passwords at Punch-Out!!'s title screen. To use the Another World Circuit and View the Credits codes, input the password, then hold Select and press A and B.

Busy Signal:

800-422-2602

This code was Nintendo's toll-free phone number during the late '80s.

Fight Mr. Dream:

007-373-5963

Another World Circuit:

135-792-4680

View the Credits:

106-113-0120

STREET FIGHTER II TURBO
SNES

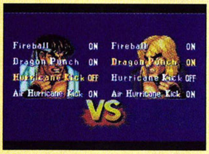
If you want a little extra challenge out of Street Fighter II Turbo, use these codes to limit your attacking capabilities or to increase the game's speed.

Mega Speed

You can really crank up the speed if you have a second controller. After the Capcom logo appears and the large word "TURBO" is scrolling across the screen, press down, R, up, L, Y, B on controller 2. You'll be able to increase the game's speed to 10 stars.

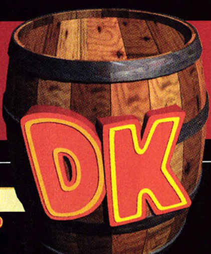
Disable Special Moves

To disable player-controlled special moves in arcade mode, press down, R, up, L, Y, B on controller 1 at the Capcom logo that appears prior to the title screen. You'll hear a sound if you enter the code correctly.



Fireball	ON	Fireball	ON
Dragon Punch	ON	Dragon Punch	ON
Hurricane Kick	OFF	Hurricane Kick	OFF
Air Hurricane Kick	ON	Air Hurricane Kick	ON

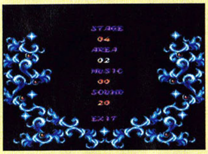
You can also disable specific special moves in versus mode. At the Handicap/Stage Select screen, press down, R, up, L, Y, B on controller 2. A screen that appears lets you turn special individual moves on or off for your chosen fighters.



SNES

Level Select and Sound Test

Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts is among the toughest games on the Super NES, but you can give Arthur an assist with this code if you have a second controller.



STAGE
04
AREA
02
MUSIC
00
SOUND
20
EXIT

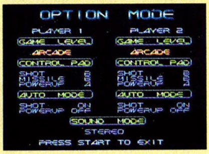
Enter the option screen and highlight Exit, then hold L and Start on controller 2 and press Start on controller 1. You'll enter a screen where you can select your level and listen to the game's music and sound effects.

SNES

One ship against the entire evil Bacterion Empire? That hardly sounds fair. Even the odds (or give yourself an extra challenge) with this wide array of codes.

Arcade Mode

If the regular difficulty settings aren't tough enough, test yourself with Arcade mode. Enter the options menu, then highlight Difficulty and press A rapidly until the setting changes to Arcade.



OPTION MODE

PLAYER 1
GAME LEVEL
ARCADE
CONTROL PAD
SHOT
MISSILE
POWERUP
AUTO MODE
SHOT ON
POWERUP OFF

PLAYER 2
GAME LEVEL
ARCADE
CONTROL PAD
SHOT
MISSILE
POWERUP
AUTO MODE
SHOT ON
POWERUP OFF

SOUND MODE
STEREO
PRESS START TO EXIT

Full Power-Up

Pause the game and press up, up, down, down, L, R, L, R, B, A. Unpause to receive a full complement of weapons.

Fake Power-Up

If you pause the game and enter the Konami Code—up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A—your ship will explode when you unpause.

30 Extra Ships

At the title screen, hold left on the Control Pad and press A, A, A, then Start.

Extra Continues

At the title screen, press X rapidly to earn extra continues. As you press the button, the Credits counter will increase.

SNES

What's more fun than a barrel full of monkeys? Exploring the worlds of Donkey Kong Country using these codes. With these cheats enabled, you can gain additional lives, listen to the game's music, or practice the bonus stages.

Start with 50 Lives

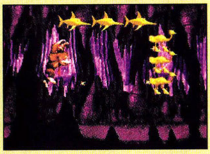
At the file select screen, highlight Erase Game and press B, A, R, R, A, L. You'll hear a sound to confirm correct code entry, and when you start the game you'll have 50 lives.

Sound Test

At the file select screen, highlight Erase Game and press down, A, R, B, Y, down, A, Y, Select. You can cycle through the game's musical tracks by pressing Select repeatedly.

Practice the Bonus Rounds

During the opening sequence where Cranky is playing his gramophone, press down, Y, down, down, Y. You'll be taken to a secret cave where you can collect animal tokens to practice playing the bonus stages.

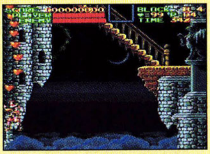


Grab three matching animal tokens to play a bonus round corresponding to the type of token you collected. When the round is over you will return to the hidden cave and can play another bonus round.

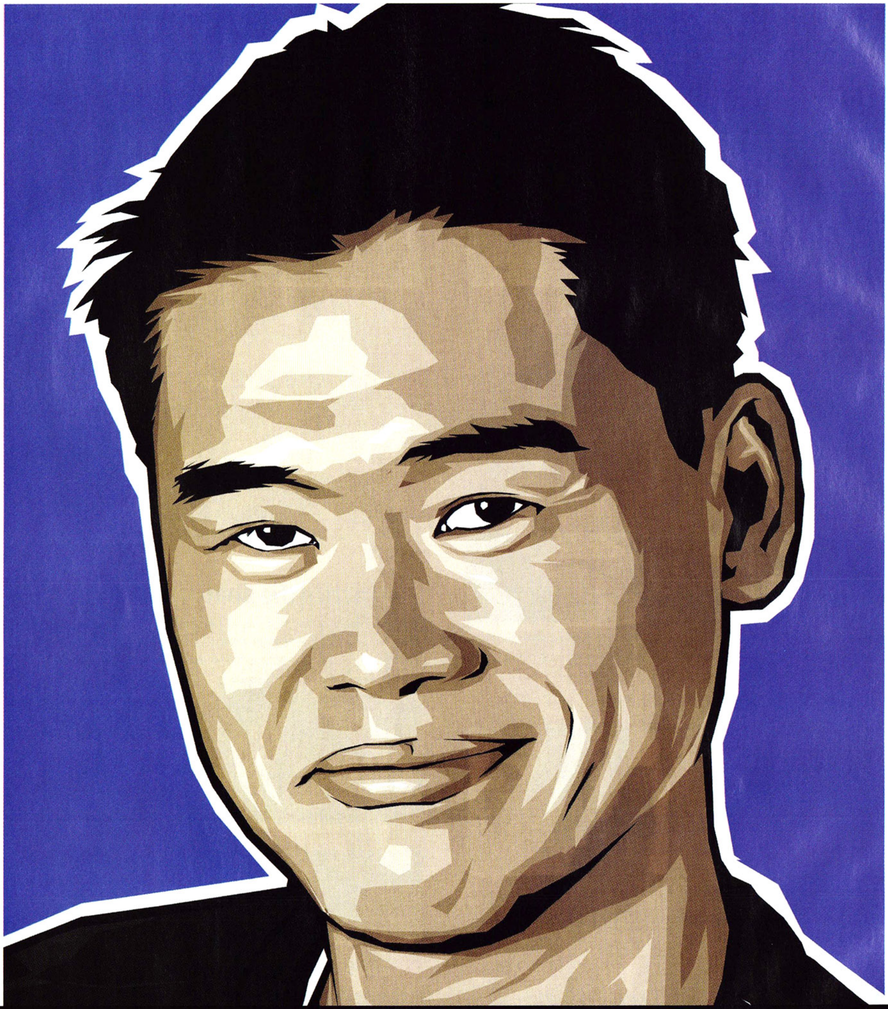
SNES

Final Battle Treasure Trove

If you've made it all the way to the end of Super Castlevania IV, you deserve a reward. Instead of going up the stairs for the final battle, jump left off the ledge to find an invisible platform, then go farther left to get fully powered up.



Jump to the left from the ledge below the stairs; you'll land on an invisible platform. Jump left again to land on another platform, where you'll be rewarded with a rain of power-ups. Climb the invisible stairs back to the central platform, then jump back to the ledge.



5

Power Profiles

Keiji Inafune

What Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto is to Nintendo, Keiji Inafune is to Capcom. Not only did Inafune create Mega Man, one of the most popular characters in gaming, but as he's moved from character designer to corporate executive, he has become a guiding force for his company, and one of the most influential game creators in Japan.

When Inafune created Mega Man approximately 20 years ago, he probably had no idea what he was getting into. Who would have guessed that his blue hero would eventually become one of the most prolific characters in the business, or that fate would lead the "father of Mega Man" to oversee his creation through the eras of 8-bit, 16-bit, 32-bit, and beyond? But while Mega Man may be Inafune's most recognizable creation, it's far from his only contribution to gaming. Inafune is driven to deliver new experiences with each generation of hardware, and is dedicated to delivering compelling hard-core games that appeal to audiences the world over. His works have taken players from futuristic robot-filled cities to ancient Rome to terror-filled shopping malls—even to the land of Hyrule. Wherever Inafune takes gamers next, it's sure to be somewhere that elevates gaming to new heights.

date of birth:
May 8, 1965

birthplace:
Osaka, Japan

position:
Managing Corporate Officer, Head of Research & Development and Online Business at Capcom

best known for:
Being the father of Mega Man, his youthful good looks

favorite food:
Mangos

current projects:
Overseeing all Capcom games in production

Nintendo Power: Can you tell us how you got into the video game business?

Keiji Inafune: I went to design school and saw that video game companies were hiring designers. I thought that I would be able to design the things I wanted if I joined a game company, so I pursued the opportunity.

NP: When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

KI: When I was a child, I really wanted to become a manga artist. I enjoyed thinking up stories and designing characters for my own comedy manga, so when I was in elementary school I really hoped it would be my career. However, once I got into middle school, reality hit and I realized it wasn't a real possibility for me.

NP: How has the video game industry changed since you've been involved with it? And how has your role changed within the industry?

KI: When I first joined the industry, and this might be a bit blunt, but there weren't many large, wonderful companies making games. Instead, there were many companies that wanted to become large by making video games. So back then, the industry wasn't very strict or set in its ways. Now that the industry has large companies that are listed on stock exchanges, making games has become very serious business. Things aren't quite as unrestricted as before. On the other hand, now we have more money, better equipment, and better environments to work in. When I first started, the equipment and environment weren't nearly as good—I was even working in a room with pipes coming out of the walls! My role has changed as well. I used to be the guy making things in the studio from start to finish; now I oversee the production of titles. I like seeing all of our young staff working hard to make incredible games.

NP: Where did you get your inspiration when you were originally creating the characters of Mega Man?

KI: A lot of it, I think, came from my influences from Japanese anime. Growing up, I drew pictures all my life. I was an artist. For instance, Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy*, or *Tetsuwan Atom*—that was a big influence. [I was] just picking all the things I liked about Japanese anime and putting that into a single character.

NP: I've heard you consider Mega Man 3 one of your least-favorite Mega Man games. Why is that?

KI: The reason I said that was my least favorite wasn't because of the gameplay or that I didn't like the game, but it was mainly because of just what went into the game and what was behind the release of the game. For example, I was forced to put the game out before I thought it was ready, and we lost the main planner along the way, so I had to basically fill in that role to finish the game. I thought that we needed more time, and we had two months to finish the final 50 percent of the game. I knew that if we had more time to polish it, we could do a lot of things better, make it a better game, but the company said that we needed to release it. The whole environment behind what went into the production of the game is what I least favored. Numbers one and two—I really wanted to make the games; I was so excited about them. Number three—it just turned very different.

NP: Which do you think is

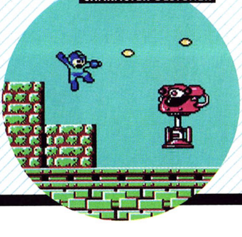
> *"A lot of it, I think, came from my influences from Japanese anime. Growing up, I drew pictures all my life. I was an artist."*

GAMEOGRAPHY

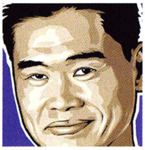
If you're a true-blue game fan, you've probably played most of these titles, plus a few dozen additional Mega Man games we didn't have room to list.

STREET FIGHTER
1987, ARCADE
CHARACTER PORTRAIT ARTIST

WHAT STRENGTH!!
T FORGET THERE ARE MA
U ALL OVER THE


MEGA MAN
1987, NES
CHARACTER DESIGNER

DUCKTALES
1989, NES
CHARACTER DESIGNER



"... we are known as a hard-core gamer's gaming company. We may not be making games like that just because everybody else is. We can't let everybody else decide what we're going to make."

worse: the American box art for Mega Man 1 or the European box art for Mega Man 2?

KI: It's hard to compare directly, but I think the cover of Mega Man 1 for the US did more damage to the game, so that would probably be my choice.

NP: Is there anything you wish you'd done differently with the Mega Man franchise?

KI: I think, yes, there's always things that when you look back you wish you could have done better, and that isn't just for me and Mega Man, but me and every other game I've made or worked on, and I think for most developers out there. But you can't get stuck in what you should have done better, because that was how good you were at the time.

NP: Do you ever get sick of Mega Man? Just "enough; too much Mega Man!"?

KI: For me, it's more like I'm Mega Man's father, so a parent doesn't get tired of looking at their kids' faces after 20 years. For me, I'm looking at my son or something I've created, so I don't really get tired of it.

NP: What other games did you work on during your 8-bit and 16-bit days?

KI: I made Mega Man, but Capcom recognized my talents as an artist, as a character designer, so a lot of the other things I worked on at Capcom in those early days were the Disney titles that Capcom was producing—[such as] DuckTales and Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers—because I could draw characters and draw them pretty well, I think. So I did a lot of those games, and then even during the process I would work back and forth with Disney on those. Another one I did work on in some sort of capacity was the first Breath of Fire. I started on that as a character designer. I was pretty confident in the designs that I did, but my boss at the time didn't really like them, so he took me off the project, and the person he put on the project, who had just joined the company, was a very, very talented artist. He's the one doing the designs for the current Devil May Cry 4. So he took over and redid the designs, although he was very respectful of my original character designs and left those in his newly redesigned characters for the game. It really injured my pride when I was told by my boss, "I don't like your designs," and he took me off the project. I considered almost quitting Capcom just because, you know, this is what I do. That was the first time I thought I don't have to stick to a company. I need to stick to myself, make myself happy, do what I need to do, whether it's at Capcom or somewhere else. And so although it did hurt my pride, getting past that experience made me stronger, I think. I know that's not why my boss told me he didn't want to use my designs, but as a result I think I became a stronger person and a better game creator.

NP: As you've transitioned more to an upper-management role, are there things you miss that you don't get to do anymore?

KI: The thing that I miss the most is my free time. I can't take days off or use my free time in the ways I'd like. I don't really have control of my time as much as I'd like to have anymore.

NP: What is your philosophy on making games that appeal to a global audience, and why do you feel this is important?

KI: It is important because it is the difference between one person seeing your work and having one hundred see your work. No matter how hard you try, you will only have a hundred-some million people who can play your game [in a single country], but if you focus on the world, you will have hundreds of millions of people who can enjoy your work. I think that is very important, even if it seems a bit obvious. It is hard to achieve that goal because, even though we are similar in many ways, every culture thinks differently, and making things that appeal universally is a challenge. But that challenge is part of the fun.

NP: What are the biggest differences between gamers in Europe, North America, and Japan?

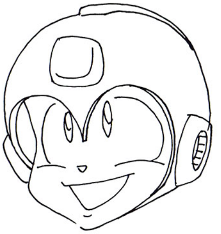
KI: I think that gamers and people that play games are really different in all three regions. Even looking at Europe, it's not just one country; you can't group them all together. Everybody's different. I think the biggest thing developers need to realize is gamers are not all the same. They don't like all the same games. When games first started coming out, it was the same kind of people playing games, and if you enjoyed games, everybody kind of enjoyed the same kind of games, but gamers have grown up and you've got new generations starting to play games as they grow up. You've got new kinds of games, new hardware, so everything's changing. You can't make three versions of the game and change it, have one version that Japanese people like and change this over here so Americans will like it. The important thing is to realize [this] and see what kind of things people like and try to put elements of those so that anybody who plays in any of the regions can hook it

MEGA MAN X
1994, SNES
PLANNER/WRITER/
CHARACTER DESIGNER

MEGA MAN LEGENDS
1998, PLAYSTATION
PRODUCER

ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
PRODUCER

MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK
2001, GBA
PRODUCER



up and find something about it that they enjoy. I think that's the big thing.

NP: What are your thoughts on the trend of companies creating more casual games, especially since Capcom is known for appealing to the hard-core user?

KI: Especially with the Nintendo DS, I think there is a big movement toward more casual-like games that people can pick up and play. And there are companies who are doing that because that's what's popular right now and that's easy and the development times are short and it costs less and they sell well, too. Just, in Capcom's point of view, like you said, we are known as a hard-core gamer's gaming company. We may not be making games like that just because everybody else is. We can't let everybody else decide what we're going to make. So we need to keep true to our roots and keep making games that people expect us to make, but still branch off into other genres or areas from time to time. But at least for Capcom, we need to stay true to what we're good at. Looking at the DS, we still want to make hard-core games for gamers, for people who love games. But if it's on DS, we have to figure out how to make a game unlike what everybody else is doing; we have to figure out how can we make a very Capcomlike game that still fits within the parameters of the DS and how that works.

NP: What would you say the biggest challenge is facing the gaming industry today?

KI: I think the biggest challenge that everybody is facing is just the rising cost of making games these days—just technology and needing more people to make a single game. It takes longer, even with more people, to make games. So the biggest challenge is figuring out how to make games that can still turn a profit to make sure we can make the next game and the next game. I think every company out there is facing the same challenge. At Capcom, it's just a matter of figuring out our strategy and making sure we can continue making the great games we want to make [and] that gamers want to buy, and survive five, ten, however many years games keep going.

NP: What aspect of creating a video game do you enjoy most?

KI: The best part of making games is the excited feeling you get when you first decide that "this is the kind of game I want it to be!" Whether you can do it, what it will be like . . . All of that is very exciting. The other great part is when the game is released. You have the nervous energy of waiting to see if the game you were so excited about is well-received by users. The initial burst of energy and the payoff upon release of the game is what makes the hard months in the middle bearable.

NP: What types of games are personally your favorites?

KI: Overall, I really like action games. Lately I've been into more first-person shooters, although I don't have a whole lot of time to play them. And then I also like games where I can play with my friends or play with other people. For example, I like playing Mario Kart with my son. We just sit down together and play together.

NP: When you're stumped by a difficult problem during the game-creation process, what's your process for working through it?

KI: I like consulting with lots of people, both inside and outside the company. I also like consulting with my family, especially my son. I'll often go to him with a problem and ask him what he would do in that case.

NP: What would you like to be remembered for 50 years from now?

KI: I'd love for people to look back and say they enjoyed the games. I'd also like people to be able to look back and think one of the games I worked on was a turning point in gaming history. I think that Street Fighter II and Resident Evil are two of these games, and I would like to add one of my own to the list.

NP: Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?

KI: I really like Akira Kurosawa and James Cameron. I highly respect film directors, especially those two, because they will do anything to fulfill their creative visions, even if they think it would be hard themselves.

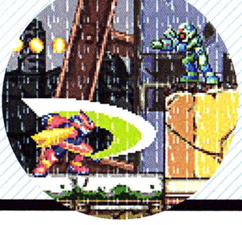
NP: What is your favorite nongaming hobby or pastime?

KI: I enjoy watching films.

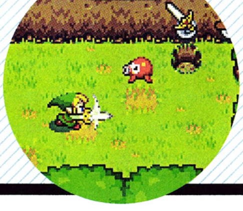
NP: If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?

KI: There'd be lots of superpowers I'd like to have, but I think the one I'd want most is being able to control and travel through time. I think being able to see the past and the future, and having the knowledge and power to change things would be the most impressive power one could have. I think it comes from my desire to know as much about things as possible.

MEGA MAN ZERO
2002, GBA
PRODUCER

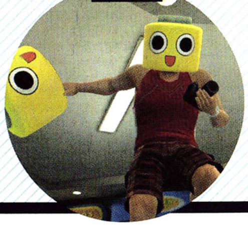


THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP
2005, GBA
PRODUCER



SHADOW OF ROME
2005, PLAYSTATION 2
PRODUCER

DEAD RISING
2006, XBOX 360
PRODUCER



SUPER SMASH BROS. Brawl

Wii SMASH FILES #12

YOSHI

FIRST GAME APPEARANCE:
Super Mario World - Super NES (1991)

KNOWN FOR:
His eggs, his appetite, his island

BIOGRAPHY:
The first time gamers heard of Yoshi was when he appeared as a rideable sidekick for Mario after Bowser invaded the friendly green dino's homeland and encased his friends in eggs. It turned out, however, that Mario and Yoshi go back a long way: Yoshi proved himself to be the world's most tolerant babysitter when he took Baby Mario under his wing—er, tail—and helped him rescue Baby Luigi. Yoshi went on many subsequent adventures, where he put his myriad talents (including eating enemies, launching eggs, and hovering by kicking his legs wildly) to heroic use. Yoshi is a staunch ally of the Mario Bros. and can often be found joining them for a kart race, a party, or a competitive sport.

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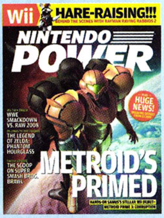
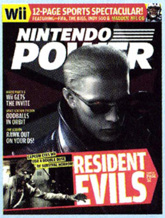


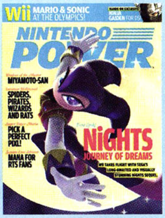
SEPTEMBER 2007, VOLUME 219
Beautiful Corruption (Metroid Prime 3: Corruption), The Main Event (WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008), Brawl Evolves, The Current State of Smash (Super Smash Bros. Brawl), Uncharted Waters (The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass), Rabbids Redux (Rayman Raving Rabbids 2), Clash is in Session (Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution), Year of the Hero (Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon), Into the Light (Luminous Arc), Power Profile Interview (Koji "Iga" Igarashi), Super Mario Galaxy, Donkey Kong: Barrel Blast, Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day!, NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams, Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol, Flash Focus: Vision Training in Minutes a Day, Rayman Raving Rabbids 2, Turn it Around, Drawn to Life, Naruto: Path of the Ninja, Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party, Operation: Vietnam, Namco Museum Remix.

Wii MAGIC!
HARRY POTTER
NINTENDO POWER
SOULCALIBUR LEGENDS

AUGUST 2007, VOLUME 218
Soul Awakening (Soulcalibur Legends), Head of the Class (Big Brain Academy: Wii Degree), A Wizard's World (Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix), A Perfect 10 (Tomb Raider: Anniversary), Run-'n'-Gun Revival (Contra 4), Flight of Fantasy (Square Enix), Ninja Master (Tomonobu Itagaki interview), Samus Turns 20 (Metroid anniversary), Power Profile Interview (Eiji Aonuma), A New Angle (Geometry Wars: Galaxies), Battallion Wars II, Luminous Arc, Sonic Rush Adventure, Driver: Parallel Lines, Naruto: Clash of Ninja Revolution, Picross DS, DK: Jungle Climber, EA Playground, Boogie, Nervous Brickdown, Pet Alien, Manhunt 2.



JULY 2007, VOLUME 217
Evil to the Core (Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles, Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition), Wii Brought the Party (Mario Party 8), Wii Sports Preview (Madden NFL 08, Mario Strikers Charged, The Bigs, Legends of the Indy 500, FIFA Soccer 08), Treasure Trove (Project Treasure Island Z), Heavy Metal (Transformers), Pokémon Triple Feature (Pokémon Battle Revolution, Pokémon Diamond and Pearl, A Trainer's History), Space Oddity (Space Station Tycoon), Power Profile Interview (Koji Kondo), No Strings Attached (Jam Sessions), Hungry for Heroes (Goichi Suda interview), Dewy's Adventure, Mega Man Star Force, Looney Tunes: ACME Arsenal, Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, Hoshigami Remix: Ruining Blue Earth, Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game, Scarface: The World is Yours, Counter Force.



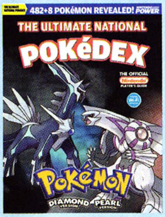
JUNE 2007, VOLUME 216
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Samus Aran: Zero Suit), Dreams Come True (Sega NiGHTS), Think Outside of the Box Office (Blockbuster Movie Titles), Sinnoh Suprises (Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl), Way Out There (Space Station Tycoon), Pump Up Your Pixls (Super Paper Mario), A Developing Revolution (The State of Nintendo: Wii Developers), Ready for War (Heroes of Mana), Enter the Ninja (Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword), Power Profile Interview (Shigeru Miyamoto), Geek Chic (Licensed products), Against the Grain (Rune Factory: A Harvest Moon Fantasy), Super Mario galaxy, Fire Emblem, The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, Mario Strikers Charged, Pokémon Battle Revolution, Big Brain Academy, Cookie and Cream, Etrian Odyssey, Worms: Open Warfare 2, SimCity DS, Brothers in Arms DS, Impossible Mission DS, Mortal Kombat: Armageddon.

WIN WITH Wii
NINTENDO POWER
POKéMON PERSPECTIVES

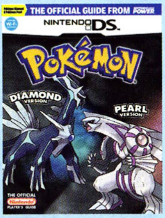
MAY 2007, VOLUME 215
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Samus Aran: Power Suit), Pearls of Wisdom (Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl), Untamed, Unmatched, Unbreakable, Unbelievable, Unescapable, Unleashed (Godzilla Unleashed), War Stories (Brothers in Arms: Double Time), Dew Process (Dewy's Adventure), 2006 Nintendo Power Awards Winners, Build a Better Robot (Custom Robo Arena), Now You're Cooking With Power (Cooking Games), Super Paper Mario: The Interview, Comeback Kid (Kid Icarus), A Legend in its Own Time (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time), Naruto: Ninja Council, Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom, Medal of Honor: Vanguard, Time Ace, Touch the Dead, Spider-Man 3, Diner Dash, Code Lyoko.

OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES

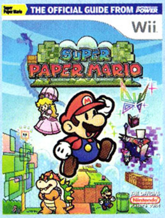
POKéMON BATTLE REVOLUTION



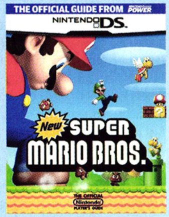
THE ULTIMATE NATIONAL POKéDEX



POKéMON DIAMOND AND POKéMON PEARL



SUPER PAPER MARIO



NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

Wii
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS

NINTENDO DS
- ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD
- PUPS: THE OFFICIAL NINTENDOGS COMPANION
- FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE
- MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME
- METROID PRIME HUNTERS
- POKéMON RANGER
- POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: BLUE/RED RESCUE TEAM
- YOSHI'S ISLAND DS

GAME BOY ADVANCE
- POKéMON EMERALD (GBA)

NINTENDO GAMECUBE
- POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

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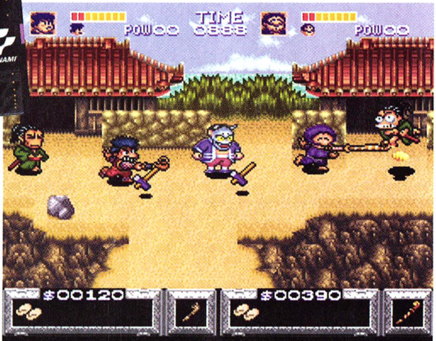
THE LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA

Goemon's first North American release was a legendary influence on the action-adventure.

THE LEGEND OF THE Mystical Ninja
Nintendo
KONAMI
SUPER NINTENDO

Platform: **SNES**
Developer: **Konami**
Publisher: **Konami**
Release Date: **February 1992**
Covered in Issues: **33, 34, 36, 42, 128**
Ninjas in Tutus: **1**

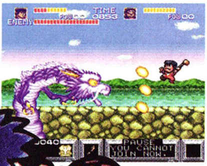


It has some RPG trappings, but Mystical Ninja delivers action first and foremost. You don't talk to villagers on the streets. You hit them with a heavy stick.

To play The Legend of the Mystical Ninja is to take a snapshot of where gaming was in the early '90s on the SNES. With one foot in the Final Fight-influenced beat 'em up action camp and one foot in the adventure genre led by The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past, the game that was known as Ganbare Goemon: Yukihime Kyuushutsu Emaki in Japan represented the transition between the arcade and the home console. Linear levels, 1-Ups, a timer, and much more fighting than making friends give the game that old-school button-mashing flair. Skill upgrades, shops, villagers, and minigames aplenty show more depth than you see in standard punch-and-jump fare from the era. And it's funny, too. Big-haired star Kid Ying (Goemon) and co-op-play partner Dr. Yang (Ebisumaru) take on fighters who have buckets for headwear and fish flopping on dry land, while they collect damsels and lucky cats for cash. Despite the fact that the game is set in Feudal Japan, the pair eats pizza and hamburgers for energy and play video games for fun (not quite Nobunaga's Ambition-level historical accuracy).

Town scenes are depicted with a 3/4 overhead view, giving you a little movement on the z-axis, while levels that lead up to boss battles offer 2-D side-scrolling action, and both views see plenty of fighting. If you lose all of your lives, you're thrown back to the beginning of a level. Or you can enter a password to jump to a save point. The game's diversions include a game show that tests your memory of the game's events (long before Chuck Quizmo repeated the gag in Paper Mario) and a faithful port of the first level of Gradius (one of a handful of games within the game). Gambling is a big theme, too, with a lottery and a horse race giving you chances to earn cash, and a slot machine mechanism determining whether helpful items or enemies will fall from the ceiling in a ninja hideout.

The Japanese library of Goemon games is voluminous. In North America, it is sparse. Following the Super NES title, the character went to Game Boy and N64 for Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon in 1997 and N64 again for Goemon's Great Adventure in 1999 (finally shedding the Mystical Ninja moniker). The last time the character was seen in a North American release was in 2001's Konami's Krazy Racers for the GBA. The Legend of the Mystical Ninja is now available on Wii's Virtual Console.
—**George S.**

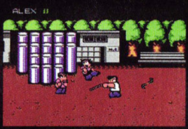


Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback.
pulse@nintendopower.com

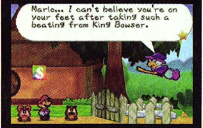
Blue hair is back, baby!

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

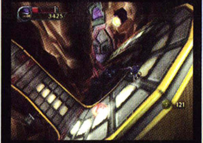
Comedy, RPG elements, and butt-kicking were not new to those few who had already latched onto 1989's River City Ransom, probably a big influence on The Legend of the Mystical Ninja. We run a line through that title and a couple that followed.



River City Ransom
Originally an American Technos release for the NES, this take on high school street toughs was remade for a GBA release from Atlus in 2004. Signature Technos blockhead characters and lots of kooky items helped bring out the comedy in a serious subject.


Mario... I can't believe you're on your feet after taking such a beating from King Bowser.

Paper Mario
The Paper Mario series started with Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars (see Playback Vol. 218), but the comedy-action-adventure with multiple perspectives also borrows from the likes of Mystical Ninja.



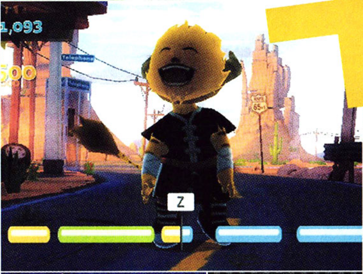
I-Ninja
One of Mystical Ninja's levels takes place in a booby-trapped fortress that takes advantage of the SNES innovation Mode 7 (which allowed background rotation). Overlooked Namco release I-Ninja (GCN, 2003) takes the mechanized environment idea to a whole new level.

REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of all the latest games.

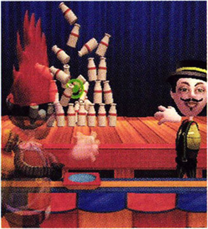
Has Retro Studios achieved perfection? The debate begins here.

Dave Mirra's BMX Challenge, Garfield's Nightmare, Alien Syndrome, and more.

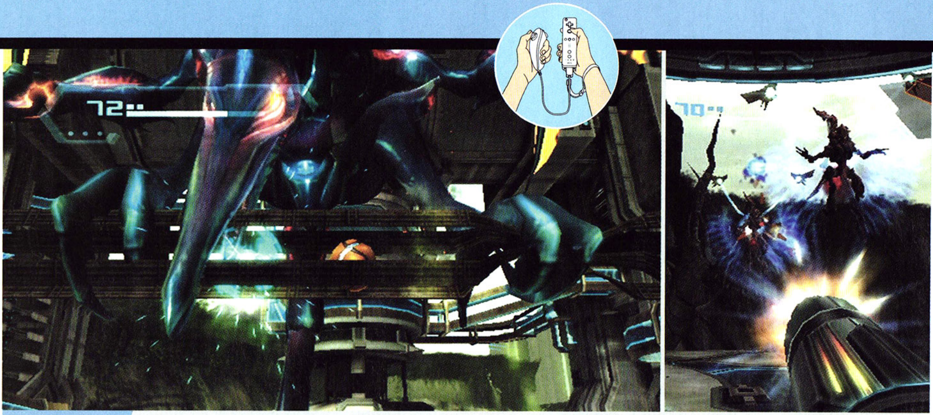


87
Helmet-check! Cleats-check! Wii remote strap-check!

88
FM radio villains? Whatever happend to crazy robotics geniuses?



88
Gobble cotton candy 'til you puke. Whee!



INCORRUPTIBLE

METROID PRIME 3: CORRUPTION

RATING: 10

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Retro Studios
ESRB: Teen

With the current rise in popularity of games suited for a wide audience, there's been a lot of nervous speculation that core gamers looking for immersive graphics, a deep story, and an intense challenge might be left out in the cold. If Metroid Prime 3: Corruption is an indicator, all the doubting can stop now—the stunning visuals and immersive gameplay of the finale to the Prime series proves that the Wii is ready for the mainstream gamer.

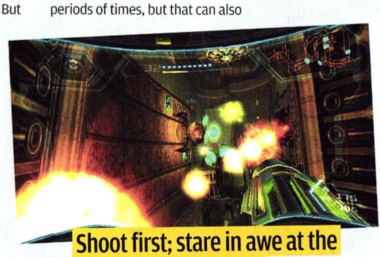
Built from scratch for the Wii, Corruption is possibly the first game that can't be confused graphically with the systems of the previous hardware generation. But while Corruption showcases great lighting, special effects, and an unwavering frame rate, the real brilliance is in the game's artistry. The locations, the enemies, objects of all sizes—the galaxy that bounty hunter Samus Aran patrols is absolutely stunning. No matter whether you're climbing along mossy cliff walls or wandering the halls of a steampunk-inspired, abandoned factory in the sky, you'll find extraordinary attention to detail everywhere you look. Space stations and ancient ruins are displayed with equal deftness—it's evident Retro's talented artists had a clear vision and were given the opportunity to execute it perfectly. Combined with excellent audio work and a stellar soundtrack, the experience is nothing short of completely immersive.

If you haven't been following along with the Prime series, don't worry; Corruption's storyline stands on its own just fine, although fans of the trilogy will also enjoy Corruption's continuity with the previous games' plots. Corruption takes place about six months after the end of Metroid Prime 2, and Samus must stop a computer virus from infecting the Galactic Federation's network, an act believed to be the work of space pirates. Before she can hop into action, she gets infected with Phazon, a material that she can use to boost her strength for short periods of times, but that can also kill her if she's not careful. Armed with this new power, she must first save the network, then attack the space pirates head-on. To keep you on the right track between story moments, you'll be reminded occasionally of your next objective—considering the amount of free-roaming exploration you can do, the reminders come in handy.

As with the other Metroid games, calling Corruption a first-person shooter is misleading—there's nearly as much adventure, puzzle-solving, and platforming as there is combat. The secret is flawless level design that allows for a lot of freedom to explore, but you always have the sense that you're in the right place at the right time, and you know when you've reached a dead end because you don't have the right equipment. The developers at Retro have the uncanny ability to maintain platforming elements from a first-person perspective like no other studio—you can jump across wide gaps with confidence and visualize a route through a tricky section. Samus's new arsenal of weapons also integrates smartly into the level design, as many of them serve a secondary purpose for opening doors or solving puzzles.

Since its introduction, gamers have seen great potential in the Wii remote as a natural controller for first-person action games. But while several titles have pulled off the method adequately, Corruption is the first that doesn't leave any room for you to consider whether it would be better with a traditional controller. From shooting enemies to targeting grapple points to scanning artifacts into your logbook, the system works impeccably. You'll also use the Wii remote to manipulate devices, such as to insert an object into a wall by shoving the remote toward the screen, then cranking it clockwise to lock the object in place. You'll use the nunchuk's motion controls to latch onto objects to perform various tasks, such as ripping debris away from a door, or a shield off an enemy. When we tried these maneuvers earlier in production, they felt merely adequate—obvious refinements have now made this one of the most polished aspects of the game.

There will be murmurs about the lack of a multiplayer mode and a rather light implementation of WiiConnect24—ignore them. Metroid has always been about quality single-player adventuring. To that end, Corruption exemplifies the Metroid experience better than any game before it. Deeply enjoyable and satisfying, this is the title that gamers have been waiting for.
—Chris S.



Shoot first; stare in awe at the level design later.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT TYPES OF GAMEPLAY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FOR THE Wii BALANCE BOARD?

The crew contemplates life beyond the game couch.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Obviously World Class Track Meet 2. The Power Pad lives, baby! Seriously though—Konami could take DDR to the next level with this thing.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

A snowboardng game might be a knee-jerk reaction, but I'm a sucker for fresh powder. It's time to breathe new life into the 1080 series, and this is the way to do it.

GEORGE SINFIELD

When I visited the developers of Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam before launch, they had a remote fastened to a skateboard for a control test. They would have loved to make the game for the Wii Balance Board.

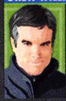
STEVE THOMASON

A light gun shooter that uses the Balance Board in conjuction with the Wii Zapper—allowing you to duck behind cover and whatnot—could be a real hoot.

SCOTT PELLAND

I'd like to see a dĕveloper use the Balance Board to control movement through an environment so players would virtually walk or run through the game's world.

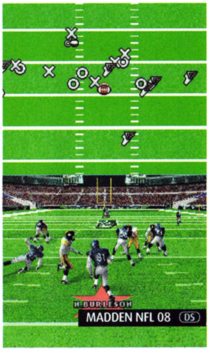
DREW WILLIAMS



I have my fingers crossed for a Cirque du Soleil game. I've always wanted to balance several tiny foreigners on my head.

PETE MICHAUD

I can only imagine how fun a kiteboarding game that made use of the Balance Board would be. Handle passing the Wii Remote while landing a frontside 360? Priceless.



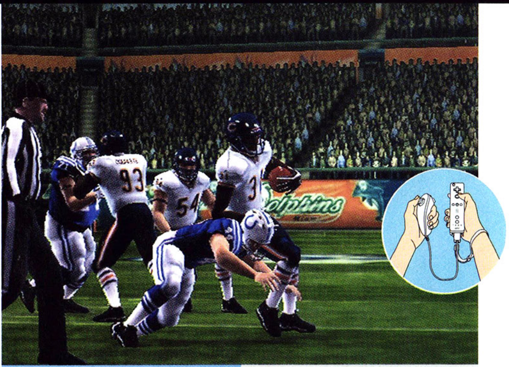
MADDEN NFL 08 (DS)

MADDEN NFL 08

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EXIENT
ESRB: EVERYONE

EA manages to pack an amazing amount of gameplay and options into its annual gridiron extravaganza for DS: color-coded tags showing which receivers are open and which aren't, "read-and-react" icons indicating opposing player strengths, single-card download capability, Paper Football mode, and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection options are just some of the new features found in Madden NFL 08. Sounds impressive. And the stuff that works is great. The color-coded receiver tags make for quick reads on pass plays, and the sliding action of Paper Football is a natural for touch-screen control. But even with all the onscreen help, the gameplay can be daunting; there're just too many little things to identify and react to, and you can forget about glancing from one screen to the other within the few seconds that transpire during most plays. I found myself wondering if a portable football game really needs all the bells and whistles that the console versions have, particularly when features such as Create-a-Play are so awkward to use that no one ever will. But even with its faults, this is the best DS Madden title. The game delivers excellent 3-D graphics, superior sound, and a mostly fun football experience if you stick to the basics. And there's always next year to make it perfect. —**SCOTT P.**



EVERYTHING BUT THE TURDUCKEN

IT'S A MADDEN WORLD

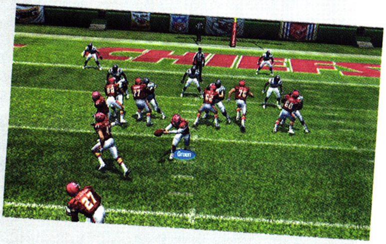
MADDEN NFL 08

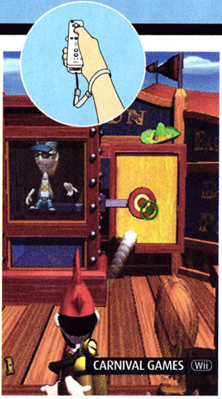
RATING: 8.0

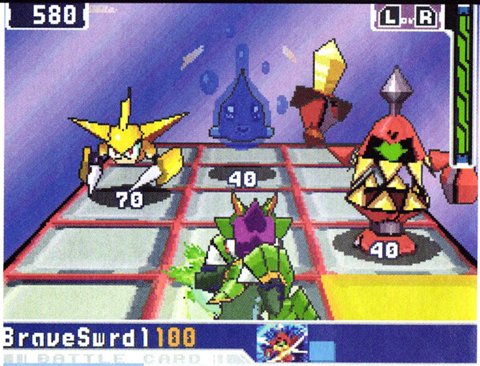
PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS
ESRB: EVERYONE

As a longtime devotee at the Church of Madden, I'm still not fully convinced by the Wii controls. Some aspects work just fine, like flicking the nunchuk left or right to make the ball carrier juke, or jabbing the Wii remote forward to lay a big hit on defense. But others—particularly flicking the remote to pass—don't feel as responsive as they should in a game where a fraction of a second can mean the difference between success and failure.

Control hiccups aside, this year's Madden delivers another excellent game of pigskin. Of course, the most noteworthy addition for the Wii version is the inclusion of online play. It's not as robust as what you might find on other consoles, but the interface is simple and easy to use, and all of the games we played went off without a hitch. Best of all, you can connect to other players without using Friend Codes. The game also features a number of new party modes, including various Wii-centric minigames and football trivia, that serve up gridiron-flavored fun in small doses. For hard-core fans, the franchise and Hall of Fame modes boast more depth than ever, with copious amounts of scouting information and tons of customization options. In fact, we've reached the point where I can't really think of anything else that I would like to see added. That's not to say there isn't room for improvement. The visuals are underwhelming, some of the commentary has been recycled for far too long now, and the occasional AI quirk (especially blockers missing their assignments) can lead to frustration. At the end of the day, though, no title reflects its sport as effectively as Madden. The only question that remains is, "Are you ready for some football?" —**STEVE T.**







BOOGIE

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: EA Canada
ESRB: Everyone 10+

Sometime during the development of EA's Boogie, it should have occurred to someone that there needs to be a lot more to getting your groove on than swinging the Wii remote rhythmically in any direction. I applaud the effort to make a music game that's more free-form than DDR, but perhaps Boogie takes it too far; the core gameplay is way too basic to offer a fun, fulfilling, challenging experience for more than a few minutes. Advanced Boogie Power moves (activated by holding down the B Button and gesturing in specified directions) and fancy Z Button poses offer a little depth, but the scoring system is so generous that you don't need to master such techniques. I never lost a round in the game's story mode, and I could regularly earn quadruple the required score. The karaoke half of the game, fortunately, fares better; it works well with the included USB mic and doesn't get old as quickly, although its replay value is also hurt by a forgiving difficulty level. The other modes are lackluster—the video-editing mode is so simple it's useless, and the multiplayer mode is nothing more than a one-on-one dance-off. And what's up with including a character-customization feature (handy for improving the bizarre character designs) but not being able to use the personalized characters in story mode? One aspect of the game I can't complain about is the song selection. Not all of the tunes are personal favorites, but with more than 35 songs running the gamut from disco to hip-hop, there's something for everyone. I wish I could say the same about the game as a whole. —Chris H.

CARNIVAL GAMES

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Global Star
DEVELOPER: Cat Daddy Games
ESRB: Everyone

At first glance, Carnival Games appears to be a carnie version of Wii Sports, but with Skee Ball instead of bowling, miniature golf instead of regular golf, and sedated-looking weirdos instead of the more-cheerful Miis. But once you dig in to this vast collection of carnival-themed activities, you'll find it to be more of a single-player-focused experience than Wii Sports. Not to say that there isn't a multiplayer mode—there is, and it's fine. But for me, the value of Carnival Games comes from exploring the carnival, earning prizes, trading your prizes for bigger prizes, and unlocking new games. Not all of the activities are hits, but there are more than 30 to choose from, and nearly all are surprisingly authentic to the carnival experience. Coin tosses, shooting galleries, stacked milk bottles—they're all there, and much more. The motion controls can be a bit unresponsive on some minigames, but on most they work well. If you're a fan of Wii's pick-up-and-play titles, then picking up Carnival Games is a no-brainer. —Andy M.

USING THE FORCE

NEW MEGA MAN, SAME FORMULA

MEGA MAN STAR FORCE

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Capcom
DEVELOPER: Capcom
ESRB: Everyone

Something old, something new, something borrowed, someone blue—that's what you get in Mega Man Star Force, the latest adventure of Capcom's ever-vigilant hero. Even though Star Force is a new game with new characters and new play mechanics, it uses the same RPG formula as the Mega Man Battle Network titles (which were available in no fewer than 10 versions on GBA). You still play as a school-age human in the real world and as Mega Man inside machines, and you still fight via a strategic real-time card-based battle system, but enough significant changes have been made to the game to keep players interested—even those who have played every Battle Network (or those who've grown tired of them). Not only are the characters more compelling and the coming-of-age story more grown up (but not too much more grown up—this is still rated E, after all), but a parallel world of electromagnetic pathways that exists on top of the real world literally adds an extra layer of depth to the gameplay. Combat has also been overhauled, now featuring a 3-D behind-the-back perspective and optional touch control; although your range of movement is more limited, the inclusion of a lock-on teleport attack and a defensive shield add more strategy to the fighting. Mega Man's new Star Force powers are also a lot of fun (and you get unique transformations depending on which of the three versions of the game you're playing: Leo, Dragon, or Pegasus). Unfortunately, there are way too many random battles, and the isometric-view dungeons are pretty plain in their designs; fortunately, many areas have touch-driven minigames added in, like tapping icons to blast evil musical notes or flicking missiles at enemy ducks. The result of such inclusions is a solid game that offers a refreshing take on familiar themes. I hope that Capcom can keep things as interesting for the inevitable sequel. —Chris H.

PERSONAL
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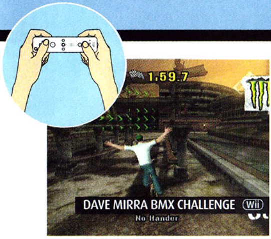

GARFIELD'S NIGHTMARE (DS)

ALIEN SYNDROME (Wii)

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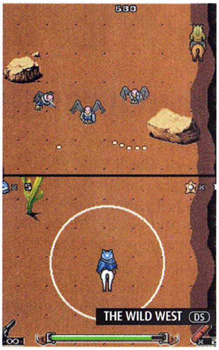
01
OPERATION: VIETNAM (DS)



DAVE MIRRA BMX CHALLENGE

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Crave
DEVELOPER: Left Field
ESRB: Everyone

Given the recent dry spell of extreme-sports games, we were probably more excited for a new Dave Mirra game than we should've been. Whoops. Essentially a poorly executed flat-ground version of Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, BMX Challenge provides very little payoff for our excitement. You hold the Wii remote sideways like in most driving games—turning actually feels pretty smooth and accurate. However, the rest of the controls, such as shaking the remote to jump, feel unresponsive—a particularly big no-no in extreme-sports games. Paradoxically, you seldom have to jump or do tricks—it's actually easier to win races by simply grinding occasionally to fill your boost meter, then boosting as much as possible. Graphically, the game would barely pass muster on the GameCube, but the terrible rag-doll physics when you crash are kind of entertaining. —**Chris S.**

GARFIELD'S NIGHTMARE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: The Game Factory
DEVELOPER: Shin'en
ESRB: Everyone

As licensed-character platformers go, Garfield's Nightmare is a pleasure. The 3-D graphics (on a 2-D plane) look great, the play control is responsive, and the environment design offers an appropriate level of challenge for the casual gamers that are likely to gravitate to a Garfield game. Though the gluttonous feline doesn't acquire skills as he ingests donuts and pizza over four dream worlds (each with four levels and a separate boss battle), he does encounter new types of obstacles and platforms at a pace that should be quick enough to keep your interest. The third world (sky and clouds) is a highlight with its wide variety of balloon-and-parachute platforms, and a boss that looks like Garfield's canine foil Odie in balloon-animal form. Just as Garfield is not a very ambitious cat, the game does not try to reach far. But what it does do, it does well. —**George S.**

ALIEN SYNDROME

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Sega
DEVELOPER: Totally Games
ESRB: Teen

Alien Syndrome is aimed squarely at fans of classic run-'n'-guns like Smash TV and Zombies Ate My Neighbors. It boasts some rudimentary RPG elements, such as leveling up your character and crafting new weapons, but the main thrust of the game is running around and blasting hordes of mindless aliens. The basic controls work great—you move with the analog stick and aim your weapon with the Wii remote, allowing you to easily run and shoot in different directions. Unfortunately, tilting the nunchuk to move the camera and manipulating the remote to execute melee attacks doesn't function nearly as well. And though a certain degree of repetitiveness is to be expected in a game like this, greater variety in terms of enemies and environments would have been appreciated. Still, Alien Syndrome delivers solid arcade-style action, and the inclusion of a four-player co-op mode always helps to mitigate a game's shortcomings. —**Steve T.**

OPERATION: VIETNAM

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Majesco
DEVELOPER: Coyote Console
ESRB: Teen

Say what you will about lock-on aiming: that it feels like a cheat—that it takes away from your own dead-on firing skills—but when you're facing down enemies in the jungles of Operation: Vietnam, with every abrupt turn of the player-controlled character making your gun's reticle turn at least 45 degrees, you'll be glad that it floats to the nearest enemy to let you fire on the run. The developers have even defined aiming differences between your squad's characters. For rapid-firing Sarge, your aim has to be close to an enemy before the reticle gloms onto the target. For sniper Scopes, lock-on is practically automatic, even though his rifle isn't. What Scopes gains in accuracy, he loses in a long reloading time. Armed with a missile launcher, tough guy Hopper fits in the one-shot-at-a-time mold while medic Doc has a machine gun and can patch up wounds with better results than the others. You can switch control between the soldiers and influence the behavior of the others using touch-triggered instructions. The game's 20 runs through jungle environments (some involving the full squad, others pairing squad mates) are brimming with enemies and traps, but can be just a little monotonous: another minefield followed by another village, and another patch of foliage. That is, until you're caught off guard by an onslaught of undistinguishable baddies coming from multiple directions. End-of-level bosses are armored vehicles—fairly standard video game fare, but well executed. Also expertly delivered are the graphics and sound (both filled with explosions), and the intuitive play control, which allows you to think about your mission rather than the movement of your thumbs. At first the game may seem to take away a little bit of control with the weapon lock-on, but in the heat of the battle, you'll feel lucky that it has your back. —**George S.**

THE WILD WEST

RATING: 3.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Majesco
DEVELOPER: Happy Happening
ESRB: Everyone 10+

By tapping the boundaries of a circle that surrounds the player-controlled character on the DS touch screen in Majesco's Western-themed shooter, you are able to fire at all angles. The drawback is that while you're going at it with guns ablaze, your fingers and the stylus will likely obscure your view of the character (canine Wolfy or feline Catty), making it difficult to avoid enemy fire and obstacles. It's such a basic flaw that you might get the idea that the developers forgot to play-test the game. The problem persists when the two-screen shooter levels give way to single-screen shooting-gallery-style sections in which you must tap the targets to hit them. In those instances, you are not able to move and fire at the same time, which ups both the challenge and frustration factors. If you stay with the game long enough to collect bonus coins, you can unlock minigames and send them to friends via a local wireless connection: a good bonus, but probably not enough incentive to endure the rigors of the main game. —**George S.**

[ARCHIVE]

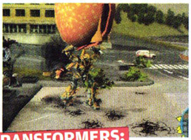
A MONTH TO REMEMBER

A bevy of high-scoring games joins the archives this month. Mario Strikers Charged (8.5) is garnering big buzz on the Internet based on its incredibly fun multiplayer play and Drew's insightful NP review. Also scoring highly are Picross DS (8.0), TouchMaster (8.0), Luminous Arc (8.0), Pet Alien (8.0), and Prism: Light the Way (8.5). Either the NP staff was feeling mighty generous or you're in for a smorgasbord of great gaming. Given our generally grumpy mood, we think it must be the later.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Wii				
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Barnyard	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Bigs	6.0	2K Sports	218	E
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	216	E10+
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Brunswick Pro Bowling	6.0	Crave	219	E
Bust-A-Move Bash!	6.5	Majesco	217	E
Call of Duty 3	6.5	Activision	211	T
Cars	N/A	THQ	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	7.0	Buena Vista	212	E10+
Cooking Mama: Cook Off	7.5	Majesco	216	E
Cosmic Family	N/A	Ubisoft	215	E
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	7.0	Atari	211	T
Driver: Parallel Lines	5.0	Ubisoft	219	M
Elebits	7.5	Konami	212	E
Escape from Bug Island!	3.5	Eidos	217	M
Excite Truck	8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Far Cry: Vengeance	4.0	Ubisoft	212	M
The Godfather: Blackhand Edition	8.0	Electronic Arts	216	M
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
GT Pro Series	5.0	Ubisoft	211	E
Happy Feet	4.5	Midway	211	E
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	7.0	Electronic Arts	218	E10+
Heatseeker	7.5	Codemasters	215	T
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	N/A	Sierra	212	E10+
Kororinpa: Marble Mania	7.0	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
Legend of the Dragon	5.5	The Game Factory	218	T
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	211	T
Madden NFL 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
Mario Party 8	7.5	Nintendo	217	E
• Mario Strikers Charged	8.5	Next Level Games	219	E10+
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	8.0	Activision	211	T
Medal of Honor: Vanguard	6.0	Electronic Arts	217	T
Meet the Robinsons	6.5	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Metal Slug Anthology	8.0	SNK Playmore USA	211	T
Monster 4x4: World Circuit	6.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	8.0	Midway	217	M
Need for Speed: Carbon	6.0	Electronic Arts	212	E10+
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E10+
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	4.5	Disney Interactive	217	T
• Pokémon Battle Revolution	6.5	Nintendo	218	E
Prince of Persia: Rival Swords	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	211	E10+
Rapala Tournament Fishing	N/A	Activision	212	E
Ratatouille	7.5	THQ	218	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Red Steel	8.0	Ubisoft	211	T
Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition	9.0	Capcom	218	M
Scarface: The World Is Yours	7.5	Sierra Entertainment	218	M
Sonic and the Secret Rings	8.5	Sega	214	E
Spider-Man 3	6.0	Activision	217	T
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	7.0	THQ	211	E
SSX Blur	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
Super Paper Mario	9.5	Nintendo	216	E
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz	8.5	Sega	211	E
Super Swing Golf	7.5	Tecmo	212	E
Surf's Up	6.0	Ubisoft	217	E10+
Tamagotchi: Party On!	2.5	Namco Bandai	217	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
TMNT	5.0	Ubisoft	215	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	6.0	Ubisoft	211	M
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	212	E10+
Transformers	5.5	Activision	219	T
Trauma Center: Second Opinion	8.5	Atlus	211	T
WarioWare: Smooth Moves	9.0	Nintendo	212	E
Wii Play	7.0	Nintendo	213	E
Wii Sports	8.0, 8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Wing Island	5.5	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions	N/A	Activision	212	T
NINTENDO GAMECUBE				
Avatar: The Last Airbender	7.0	THQ	210	E
Baten Kaitos Origins	8.0	Nintendo	209	T
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	211	E10+
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
FIFA 07	8.0	Electronic Arts	210	E
Flushed Away	6.5	D3PA	210	E
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	6.5	Midway	210	E10+
Happy Feet	N/A	Midway	211	E
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	5.5	Sierra	209	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	212	T
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	7.5	LucasArts	209	E10+
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	7.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	T
Need For Speed: Carbon	7.5	Electronic Arts	211	E10+
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
One Piece: Pirates' Carnival	5.5	Namco Bandai	209	E
Open Season	8.0	Ubisoft	209	E10+
Radio Allergy	5.0	O~3	215	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	6.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	8.5	THQ	210	E
TMNT	N/A	Ubisoft	214	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	4.5	Ubisoft	210	M
Tomb Raider: Legend	7.5	Eidos	211	T
NINTENDO DS				
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	6.5	THQ	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	T
• Bomberman Land Touch!	7.0	Atlus	211	E
Brain Boost: Beta Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Brain Boost: Gamma Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Brothers In Arms DS	9.0	Ubisoft	218	T
Cake Mania	5.5	Majesco	216	E
Cartoon Network Racing	N/A	The Game Factory	213	E
• Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	9.0	Konami	211	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Charlotte's Web	6.0	Sega	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	6.5	Buena Vista	210	E
Children of Mana	6.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
• Clubhouse Games	7.0	Nintendo	209	E
Code Lyoko	7.0	The Game Factory	218	E10+
• Contact	6.5	Atlus	209	E10+
Cookie & Cream	6.5	Agetec	217	E
Cooking Mama	7.0	Majesco	209	E
Crash Boom Bang!	4.0	Sierra	209	E
Custom Robo Arena	7.5	Nintendo	215	E10+
Death Jr. And The Science Fair of Doom	5.0	Konami	217	E10+
• Diddy Kong Racing DS	7.5	Nintendo	213	E
• Digimon World DS	N/A	Namco Bandai	212	E
Diner Dash: Sizzle & Serve	6.5	Eidos	217	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu	4.0	Atari	217	E
Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle	7.5	Koei	219	E10+

REVIEWER NOTES



TRANSFORMERS: THE GAME

I think Steve T. must have been having a bad day when he reviewed Transformers: The Game. True, it's extremely formulaic and arbitrary in its mission structure, and the game is full of missed opportunities, but the gameplay is solid, it looks good, and the sense of controlling a powerful, destructive robot comes through. And how could any Transformers fan not enjoy playing as G1 Optimus Prime, beating the crap out of a re-envisioned Shockwave?

—Chris H.

>SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE

With all of these Brawl updates, I've got a fever and the only prescription is more Melee. Seriously—if you haven't done so yet, go back and play one of the best reasons to own a GameCube (or a Wii.)

—Pete M.

TOUCHMASTER

There are rafts of ho-hum minigame compilations for the DS, but TouchMaster stands apart from the crowd. Nearly all the arcade-style games are adequately short, but maddeningly addictive—if you have three minutes on the bus or five hours on a plane, TouchMaster always feels like the right length.

—Chris S.

Title	Score	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
Elite Beat Agents	9.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	T
Etrian Odyssey	7.0	Atlus	217	T
F-24 Stealth Fighter	3.5	Majesco	215	E10+
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2.0	2K Games	218	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
• Final Fantasy III	8.0	Square Enix	211	E10+
• Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales	7.0	Square Enix	216	E
Flipper Critters	4.5	Ignition Entertainment	218	E
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Fossil League D.T.C.	N/A	D3PA	214	E
Freedom Wings	6.0	Natsume	207	E10+
Fullmetal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy	7.0	Destineer	212	T
• Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game	7.0	Destineer	219	T
Glory Days 2: Brotherhood of Men	6.0	Eidos	218	E10+
Gunpey DS	6.5	Namco BAndai	210	E
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	7.0	Electronic Arts	218	E10+
• Heroes of Mana	6.5	Square Enix	219	E10+
Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: Hoshigami Remix	6.0	Aksys Games	218	E
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	8.0	Nintendo	213	T
Inuyasha: Secret of The Divine Jewel	6.0	Namco Bandai	213	E10+
Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja	6.5	Atlus	213	E10+
Justice League Heroes	3.0	Warner Bros.Interactive	210	E10+
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	N/A	Buena Vista	214	E10+
Kirby: Squeak Squad	7.5	Nintendo	212	E
Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits	7.5	Konami	214	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	4.5	LucasArts	209	E
Lost in Blue 2	5.0	Konami	215	E10+
• Luminous Arc	8.0	Atlus	219	T
Lunar Knights	8.0	Konami	213	E10+
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	N/A	Namco Bandai	210	E10+
Magical Starsign	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
• Mario Vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
Marvel Trading Card Game	4.0	Konami	213	T
MechAssault: Phantom War	8.0	Majesco	209	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Meteos: Disney Magic	7.5	Buena Vista	214	E
Micro Machines V4	N/A	Codemasters	211	E
Monster Bomber	N/A	Majesco	212	E
My Frogger: Toy Trials	N/A	Konami	211	E
Nacho Libre	7.0	Majesco	210	E10+
Naruto: Ninja Council 3	6.0	Tomy	217	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nervous Brickdown	7.0	Eidos	219	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
• Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Pet Alien	8.0	The Game Factory	219	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	9.0	Capcom	212	T
• Picross DS	8.0	Nintendo	219	E
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	7.0	Disney Interactive	217	E10+
• Planet Puzzle League	8.5	Nintendo	217	E
• Pogo Island	7.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
• Pokémon Diamond/Pearl	9.0	Nintendo	216	E
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Pokémon Ranger	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Prism: Light the Way	8.5	Eidos	219	E
Professional Fisherman's Tour: Northern Hemisphere	5.0	UFO Interactive	219	E
Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords	4.0	D3PA	215	E10+
Quickspot	5.5	Namco Bandai	214	E10+
• Race Driver: Create & Race	7.5	Codemasters	219	T
Rafa Nadal Tennis	N/A	Codemasters	213	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.0	Ubisoft	214	E
• Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	7.0	Natsume	219	E
Scooby-Doo! Who's Watching Who?	6.5	THQ	210	E
The Settlers	5.0	Ubisoft	217	E
Shrek The Third	7.0	Activision	217	E
SimCity DS	8.0	Electronic Arts	218	E
The Sims 2 Pets	5.5	Electronic Arts	211	E

RESIDENT EVIL 4: Wii EDITION

If you haven't played Resident Evil 4 yet (and you're at least 17 years of age), put down your little magazine, run (don't walk) to your nearest game retailer, and purchase the Wii version immediately. Then when you're through playing one of the greatest video games of all time, feel free to send me delicious baked goods as thanks for changing your life. —Steve T.

>DIDDY KONG RACING DS

Diddy Kong Racing was a fun game on the N64 and it would be a fun game today—if you could play it on Virtual Console. Using a control pad to fly planes takes the fun out of it.

—Drew W.

POGO ISLAND

When I first played Pogo Island, I was tempted to dismiss EA's attempt to import the Pogo brand of casual online games to the DS because of the awkward adventure element that was tacked on. But months after launch, I find it remains one of the most played titles at Pelland Manor. Why? Simplicity and portability. Poppit! in particular is always worth a few minutes between household tasks.

—Scott P.

Title	Score	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
SNK Vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	7.0	SNK Playmore	215	T
Spectrobes	8.0	Buena Vista	214	E
Spider-Man 3	7.0	Activision	217	E10+
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	6.0	Activision	212	E10+
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	5.5	Bethesda	210	E
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	7.0	Ubisoft	212	E10+
Steel Horizon	4.5	Konami	214	E10+
Tamagotchi Connection: Cornershop 2	N/A	Namco Bandai	211	E
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	N/A	Buena Vista	210	E
Theme Park	6.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
Time Ace	6.5	Konami	216	E10+
TMNT	5.5	Ubisoft	214	E10+
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	4.5	Eidos	210	T
• Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Touch Detective	6.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Touch The Dead	5.5	Eidos	217	M
• TouchMaster	8.0	Midway	219	E
• Transformers: Autobots	6.0	Activision	219	E10+
• Transformers: Decepticons	6.0	Activision	219	E10+
Trioncube	5.5	Namco Bandai	213	E
Wario: Master of Disguise	6.5	Nintendo	214	E10+
Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007	6.5	Konami	213	E
Xiaolin Showdown	5.0	Konami	212	E
Yoshi's Island DS	8.0	Nintendo	211	E
• Yu-Gi-Oh! Spirit Caller	N/A	Konami	213	E
• Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2007	N/A	Konami	215	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	210	E
Back to Stone	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	214	E
Backyard Basketball 2007	N/A	Atari	209	E
Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits!	6.5	Atlus	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Capcom Classics Mini Mix	7.5	Capcom	209	T
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
Final Fantasy V Advance	8.5	Nintendo	210	E
Final Fantasy VI Advance	9.5	Nintendo	213	E10+
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	N/A	Crave Entertainment	213	E
Ghost Rider	N/A	2K Games	213	T
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Justic League Heroes: The Flash	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	N/A	LucasArts	209	E
Mazes of Fate	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	213	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	5.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Pirates of the Caribbean:				
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Polarium Advance	N/A	Atlus	212	E
The Santa Clause 3	N/A	Buena Vista	209	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis	6.0	Sega	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	8.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	7.0	Atlus	211	T
TMNT	7.0	Ubisoft	214	E10+
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	Eidos	210	T
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Yggdra Union	7.5	Atlus	211	T

FANATICS

'Bound by Honor

Devotees of Super Nintendo classic EarthBound take video game fandom to the next level, and then some.

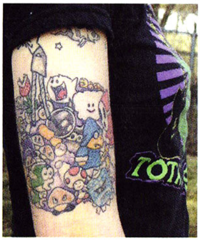
Remember EarthBound, that quirky Super Nintendo RPG that came in an oversized box? No? Well, the fine folks at Starmen.net have not forgotten. Over the years, their website has become a hub for EarthBound's rabbid fanbase, which continues to grow at a surprising rate. In the past, they have gone to drastic measures to show love for their favorite game, once even organizing a 30,000-plus-signature petition demanding the release of EarthBound's sequel, Mother 3—but their most recent project trumps all their previous efforts. The entire community pooled its resources to create and print a custom-made, 256-page book entitled EarthBound Anthology. The book chronicles the history of the franchise (EarthBound was one game of a three-part series in Japan) and its fans, including an impressive collection of fan art from around the globe.

On July 19th, five members of the Starmen.net community (including the site's creators) dropped by our office in Redmond, WA to give us a copy of the book, a hand-made resin figurine, and a gigantic box full of EarthBound fan art. The book is truly something to behold, and since it won't be made widely available, we thought we'd share some of it with you here. If you're an EarthBound fan, visit www.starmen.net to join gaming's most die-hard community.
—Andy M.

TATTOOS

Attack of the Tats

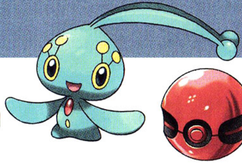
We never cease to be amazed (and a little frightened) at the lengths to which some of our readers are willing to go to show their Nintendo love. Zelda continues to be a popular tattoo theme among the Nintendo hard core, but we've been bombarded with photos of tats from all over the Nintendo universe. (Clockwise, from the top-left: John H., Jim D., Mike C., Rebecca B., Josh A., Blake K.) —Andy M.



A little ink plus a little Link equals a lotta Nintendo love.

EVENTS

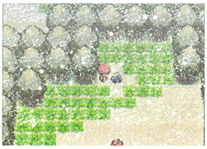
A Pokémon to Cherish



Manaphy is a special Pokémon that you won't be able to find normally in Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl; until now, the only way you could snag it was to find a Manaphy Egg in Pokémon Ranger and transfer it over. But now there's another way to get the Legendary Pokémon: on September 29 between noon and 3pm, head to a participating Toys "R" Us store in the United States to obtain a special Manaphy that you can't find anywhere else. Bring your copy of Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl into the store to download a Manaphy just like the one in the latest Pokémon movie, *Pokémon Ranger and the Temple of the Sea*. The Pokémon will be holding a Red Scarf like the one in the animated feature, and it will be enclosed in a Cherish Ball—a Poké Ball that is not otherwise available when playing Pokémon Diamond and Pearl. When you release a Pokémon from the Cherish Ball, a colorful animation appears. Manaphy is also the only Pokémon to have the move Heart Swap, which allows it to switch all stat modifications with an enemy. Don't miss this opportunity to get such a rare Pokémon! For further details, check out pokemon-games.com or toysrus.com.

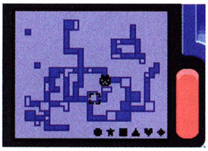
Manaphy is just one of the many Pokémon that you'll need to catch to complete the National Pokédex in Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl. Check out a few of the other methods for finding Pokémon in the land of Sinnoh. And for tips on how to catch every Pokémon, be sure to pick up The Ultimate National Pokédex from the Pokémon pros at Nintendo Power.

SPECIAL EVOLUTIONS



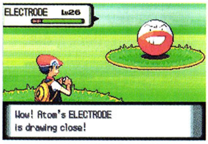
Some Pokémon you can get only by Evolving a Pokémon at a specific location. For example, to obtain a Glaceon, head up to the wintry Route 217 with an Eevee. Fight wild Pokémon in the nearby grass until Eevee Evolves into Glaceon.

RARE POKéMON TRACKING



Keep track of rare Pokémon with the Marking Map Pokétch application. The map will show you the locations of such Legendary Pokémon as Mesprit and Cresselia, provided you've already encountered them once elsewhere.

PAL PARK TRANSFERS

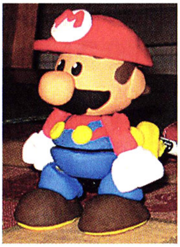


Wow! Atom's ELECTRODE is drawing close!

Bring in Pokémon from the Game Boy Advance Pokémon games via the Pal Park. Remember that you must have already at least seen all the Sinnoh Pokémon, and that you won't be able to transfer your Pokémon back to your GBA game.

ART

Mini Mario, You Complete Me



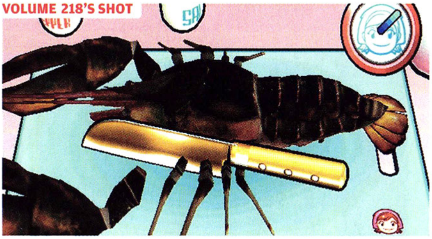
Reader Kyle F. created this Mini Mario replica from the Mario vs. Donkey Kong series using modeling clay and pipe cleaners. Mini Mario's head and waist are articulated, his hat is removable, and the key in his back actually turns. Way to go the extra mile, Kyle! —Andy M.

SCREEN TEST

Mmmmm . . . Donuts

Our sinister readers cooked up some real zingers for Volume 218's Cooking Mama screenshot—see their captions below. This month, we're continuing the food theme with a caption for Transformers: The Game. Pipe in by emailing your best caption to community@nintendopower.com.

VOLUME 218'S SHOT



"Just cut off the other ones. I just can't stand not being symmetrical!" —Mstr N.

"The easiest game hack in Cooking Mama." —Chelsea Z.

"We can rebuild him. We have the technology." —Derreck B.

"Just wait untill PETA sees this!" —Colton T.

"Oops! Someone get a sturgeon! Er . . . I mean surgeon!" —Patch Smith

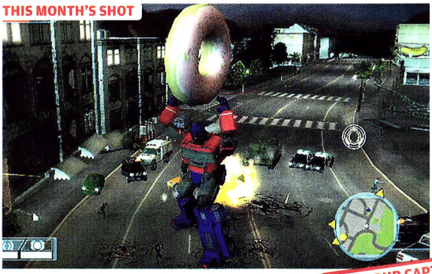
"Cut me, Mick." —Brooks S.

"And that's when the knighting ceremony went all wrong." —Jordan K.

"You're absolutely sure I'm going to look like Paris Hilton when the operation's done?" —Shinylugia2020

"No health insurance? This surgury is gonna cost you an arm and a leg." —totoannilati

THIS MONTH'S SHOT



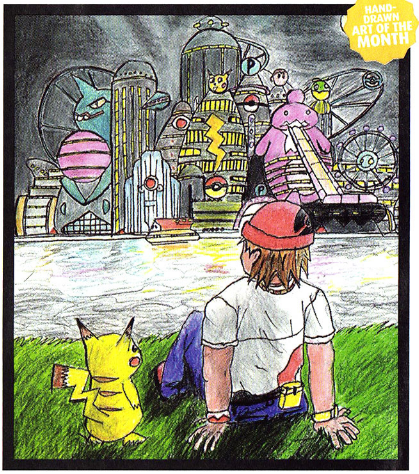
"Doughnuts are the right of all sentient beings!"

HERE'S OUR CAPTION. Think you can do better?

ART OF THE MONTH

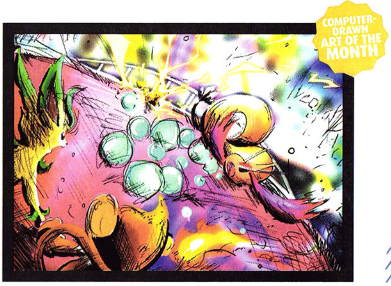
Beautiful Battles

With so many different ways to approach the topic of Pokémon, it's not surprising that the compositions of this month's winners look vastly different. But one thing the works share is a strong sense of emotion: Supersquirrel1's feeling of serenity and friendship, and Neodaft_Boy's sensation of competitiveness and peril.


HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

ARTIST:
SUPERSQUIRREL1

SUBJECT:
POKéMON BATTLE REVOLUTION


COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

ARTIST:
NEODAFT_BOY

SUBJECT:
POKéMON BATTLE REVOLUTION

Looking to submit art for the first time and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

Reader Review

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Each month we encourage our readers to submit reviews of games, but remember to follow the rules: keep them under 300 words, and check your spelling! If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an NSider at Nintendo.com. Then head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

SimCity DS

Reviewed by: MOO_MAN

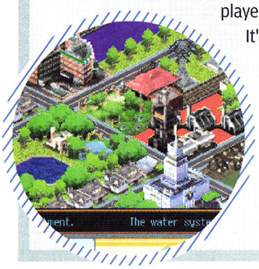
community orga
End
20,000
79,685
72 %

The latest installment in Electronic Arts' fabled urban management simulator SimCity has found its way on to the Nintendo DS. Portable city planning has never been finer.

From the get go, SimCity DS plays like a standard installment in the series: the player has to manage a city, from tax collecting and public service financing to building construction and demolition. Thanks to the DS's touch screen, all of these features are only a stylus tap or two away. Unfortunately, some of the buttons are a tad too small and thus are somewhat difficult to actually get a hold of, but the frustration they cause is minimal, something that sadly cannot be said about some of the other game features.

For being such an expansive game, one would expect some hiccups here and there in the title, but their frequency is a little too much to not take notice. The deconstruction tool the game offers is very unforgiving and will not allow you to undo possible mistakes, which sometimes can be rather large. In addition, the in-game time also will not progress if the player is doing any action, including looking at information charts, which means one actually has to watch his or her city grow, a factor that can really hinder a 15 minute play session. Bundle this with the fact that the player can save only one city a time, and the title obviously has some disappointing errors.

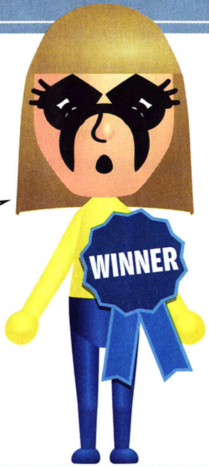
Those negative aspects aside, there is still a load of fun to be had with SimCity DS, especially if the player has some time and patience. It's easily the best portable SimCity experience across the entire portable market for sure. If the concept sounds interesting, I highly suggest you check it out.



Mii OF THE MONTH

Solid Gold Mii

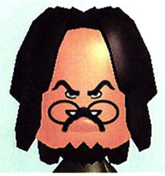
Just when we think all corners of the Mii editor have been explored, our readers discover something new. This month, we especially appreciated Bryan M.'s use of the mustache and eyebrows to resemble the face paint of former WWE superstar Goldust. Very creative, Bryan. —ANDY M.



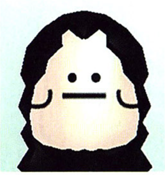
Winner

Goldust, by Bryan M.

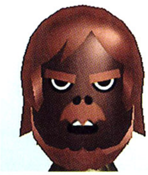
Runners-Up:



Predator, by Robert B.



Ditto, by Paul G.



Dr. Zaius, by Suntro

COSPLAY

Con Artists

On July 25 through 29, the San Diego Convention Center played host to the 2007 Comic-Con International. Huge, eager crowds lined up to see the latest in comic books, movies, toys, video games, and more, and as always, plenty of enthusiastic fans took the time to portray their favorite heroes and villains. Amid the hordes of Stormtroopers and Naruto clones, numerous gamers donned the guises of characters from franchises like Street Fighter, Fatal Fury, The Legend of Zelda, and more. See them here in all their glory. —CHRIS H.

Mega Man and Ryu

Can I interest you in a creepy flying eyeball?

Vaati

Terry Bogard and Sakura

FATAL FURY
FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT

Link

November 2007 Vol. 221

NEXT MONTH

Princesses in need, bounty hunters in space, and pigtailed poppets in red pantaloons! NP's next issue is a who's who of gaming.

GHOST WINGS

Revenant, as in Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings, refers to a spirit or ghost. (We looked it up.) Expect fascinating tidbits like this one in next month's revealing hands-on preview.

METROID GUIDE–REALLY

The miniguide we'd hoped to bring you in Volume 220 got bumped due to circumstances beyond human control. Next month we promise survival tips galore!

THE ZELDA TOUCH

The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass proves that the stylus is mightier than either the pen or the sword. NP explores what may be the best game of the year.

AND TONS MORE

From hedgehogs to blobs to heroic characters you create from your own twisted imagination, the packed November issue of Nintendo Power promises to surprise, entertain, delight, inform, and perhaps frighten.

CONTACTS

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(1-800-422-4281 TDD)
Note: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, every day. French- and Spanish-speaking representatives are available. (We are unable to answer gameplay questions on this line.)

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community@nintendopower.com
pokemon_community@nintendopower.com
pulse@nintendopower.com
E-mail sent to the above addresses will not receive a response.

ESRB GAME RATING INFORMATION
To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

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Mature (17+)
Adult (18+)
Rating Pending

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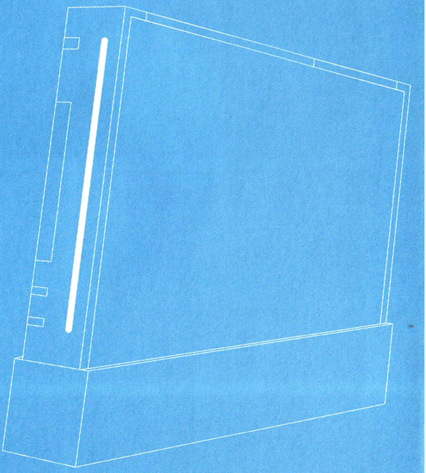

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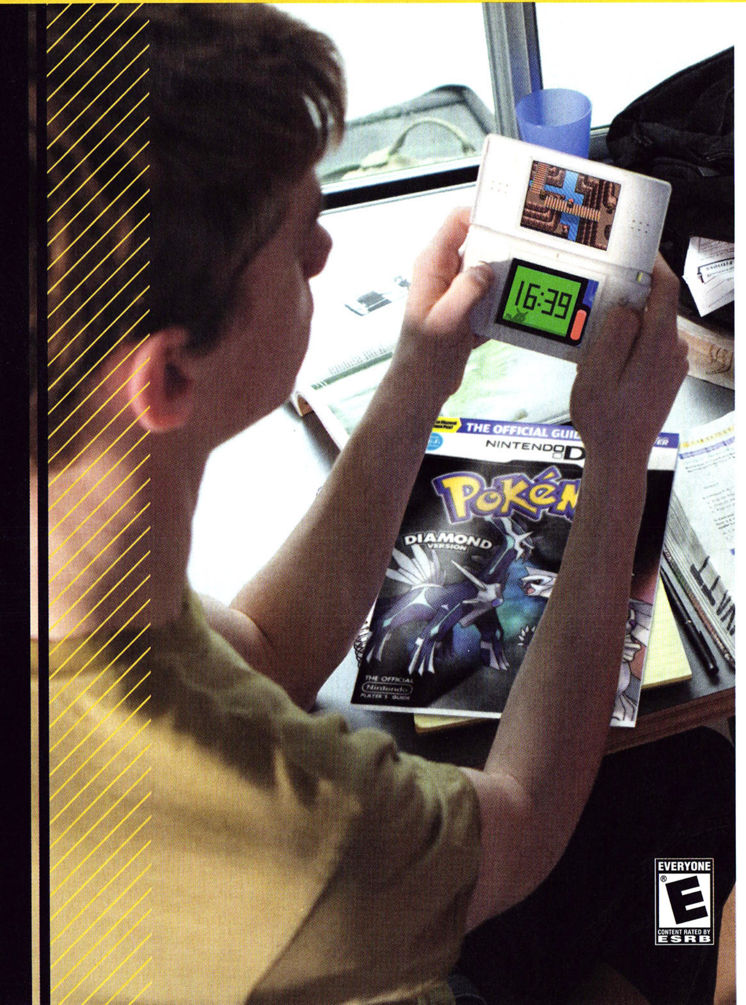
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HARE-RAISING!!!
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PLUS HUGE NEWS! BREAKING DETAILS FROM E3 2007
Wii TALK SMACK
WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008
DS LINKS TO THE FUTURE
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS
SMASH UPDATE
THE SCOOP ON SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL
METROID'S PRIMED
HANDS-ON SAMUS'S STELLAR Wii DEBUT—METROID PRIME 3: CORRUPTION

Wii MAGIC!
HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX
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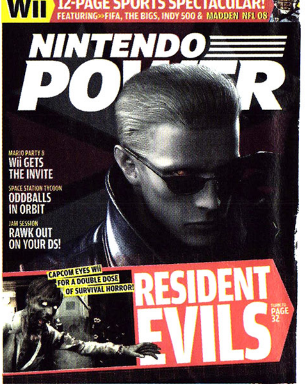
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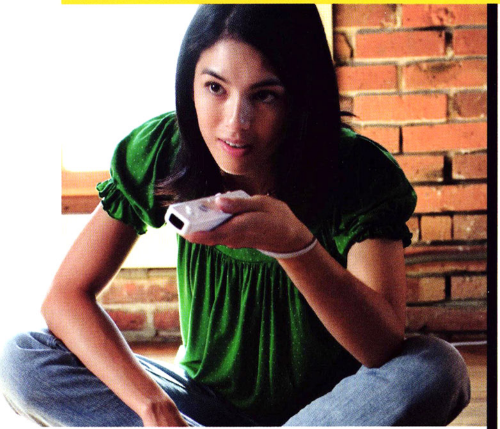

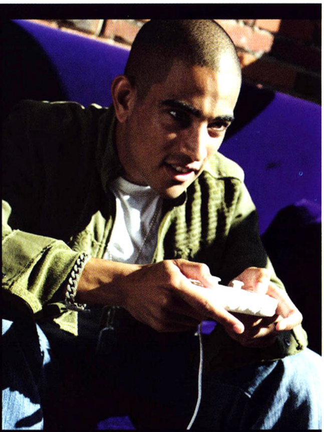

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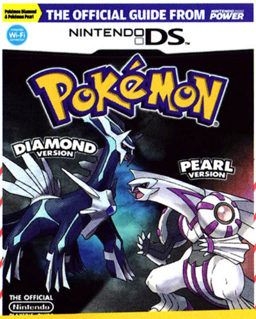
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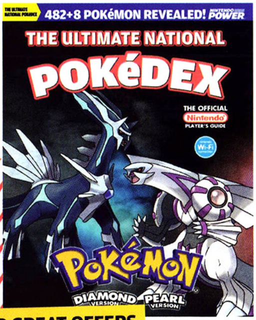
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